

Sight and Sound

**AFRICAN CINEMA:
ALGERIA
TO SENEGAL**

'PERFORMANCE'

Drugs, decadence and Jagger

TARANTINO'S CHOICE

'Chungking Express'

SASKIA REEVES

Power play and 'Butterfly Kiss'

CLINT EASTWOOD

and his music man



'APOLLO 13'

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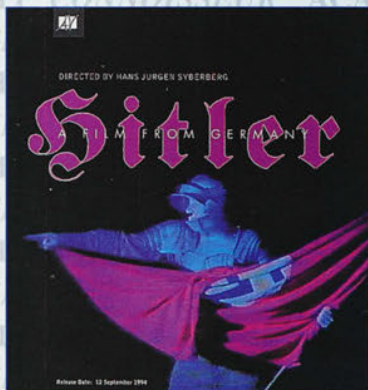
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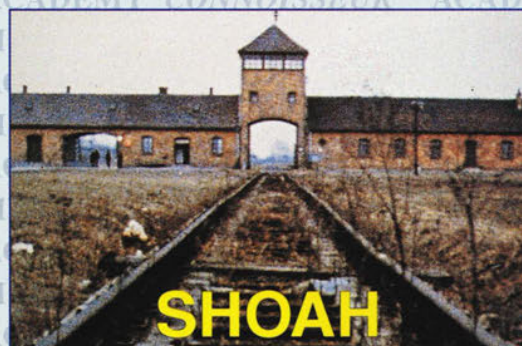
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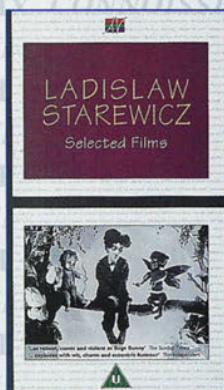
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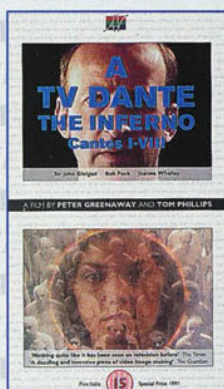
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(incorporating Monthly
Film Bulletin)

Volume 5 Issue 9(NS)

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Rahway, NJ, and at additional
mailing offices. Postmaster:
send address corrections to
Sight and Sound, c/o Mercury
Airfreight International Ltd Inc.,
2323 Randolph Avenue,
Avenel, NJ 07001
Subscription price is \$63.00
Newsstand distribution by:
Eastern News Distributors Inc.

Annual subscription rates

UK £29.50
Europe £36.00
US/Canada airspeed £36.00
Overseas surface mail £36.00
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Special rates apply to BFI
members

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and Education; and the monthly
Sight and Sound magazine



SIGHT AND SOUND MAGAZINE
Published monthly by the
British Film Institute
ISSN 0037-4806

Sight and Sound

September 1995



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"DAZZLING..." "A WILDLY ENGAGING FANTASY PIECE..."
SURPASSES ITS PREDECESSOR FOR PURE VISUAL EXCITEMENT
AND SURREAL ABANDON" SCREEN INTERNATIONAL

From the creators of 'DELICATESSEN'

LUMIERE, LE STUDIO CANAL+, FRANCE 3 CINEMA PRESENT A CLAUDIE OSSARD PRODUCTION

The City of Lost Children

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A Film by JEUNET & CARO



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SCREENPLAY BY GILLES ADRIEN JEAN-PIERRE JEUNET MARC CARO DIALOGUE GILLES ADRIEN ORIGINAL SCORE D'ANGELO BADALAMENTI DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY DARIUS KHONDJI (A.F.C.) SET DESIGN JEAN BARASSE COSTUMES JEAN-PAUL GAULTIER SOUND PIERRE EXCOFFIER EDITOR HERVE SCHNEID
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IN THE WEST END AND SELECTED CINEMAS NEAR YOU FROM SEPTEMBER 1

Same old song

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Last year, the moral minority was busy clamouring against the theatrical release of such films as *Natural Born Killers* and the video release of *Reservoir Dogs*; this autumn they seem to be shifting their attention to television. It looks as if the attack will take two forms: one directed towards taste and decency; the other towards political bias. The assaults on Michael Grade, chief executive of Channel 4, as "pornographer in chief", are a sign of the first; the revival of the Tory unit to monitor 'political balance' an example of the second.

The usual suspects on the 'decency' divide – the politicians and popular press on one side, the broadcasters and academics on the other – are already honing their rhetorical knives. Their next clash is likely to follow the publication, just after we go to press, of Sheffield University's research report on levels of violence on television. (The research has been funded jointly by the BBC and the Independent Television Commission.) According to early leaks in the press, its findings are that levels of violence have decreased slightly on the terrestrial channels – while on satellite television, especially the movie channels, the levels are somewhat higher.

Those who argue that viewing violence leads directly to acts of violence have the *Daily Mail* for their mouthpiece, as it decries the report's failure to consider the "drip, drip, drip of brutal and brutalising images" on satellite and terrestrial television, and how these might affect the "suggestible children" and "inadequate adults" who watch them. They may also have support from Virginia Bottomley, who has taken over at the Department of National Heritage and who has followed her decision not to pursue a new privacy law against press intrusion by forcing the BBC to stick to more explicit guidelines, to be drafted into the charter, on "good taste and decency". Bottomley is also planning to meet with the BBC and the Independent Television Commission to discuss the findings of the Sheffield report. The BBC's chairman, Sir Marmaduke Hussey, has pledged to hold a one-day conference in November on standards of taste and decency.

The thinking behind these policy shifts seems to be that the BBC should somehow act as a standard – or moral touchstone – for the more wayward broadcasters (such as some of the satellite stations, and Channel 4). Coupled with other proposed guidelines to enforce "impartiality and accuracy" in the BBC's current affairs – an example of an attack on the political front – this new envisioning of "Auntie's" role (or perhaps that should be "Aunt Sally's" role

from now on) only confirms that the government is eager to discipline the BBC even further than it has already done.

Meanwhile, those who dissent from the view that violence on the box breeds violence in the home have been arguing their case with renewed vigour, citing David Gauntlett's recent report, *Moving Experiences: Understanding Television's Influences and Effects*, which persuasively argues against the simplistic model of television's corrupting influence. Though acknowledging that television undoubtedly influences its audience, Gauntlett systematically demolishes the research which purports to prove that it directly 'effects' viewers. While numerous broadcasters, notably Melvyn Bragg, have expressed their support for this view, Gauntlett's report rests its case on dry and rational research. Unfortunately such research has rarely been successful in persuading the popular press out of its prejudices (and who, with the privacy legislation squelched, are in little danger of having their freedom of expression curbed).

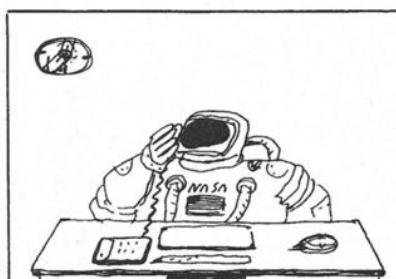
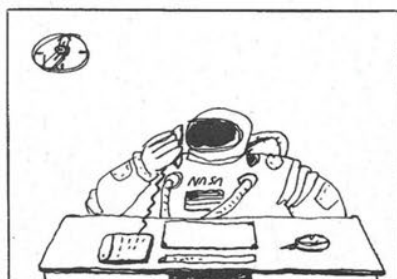
Quite where the New Labour party stands on both the decency and the impartiality issues is far from clear. Of course they oppose Tory attacks on the BBC, but that doesn't mean when (if) they gain power they won't become equally censorious. And if Tony Blair's views of video are anything to go by, he is unlikely to be a staunch defender of television's right to offend (particularly the BBC's).

Whatever Labour's position, it seems highly ironic that this row over broadcasting should be stirring at the moment when old-style terrestrial television (and particularly the BBC) seems poised finally to relinquish its central position in the nation's culture. As the new technologies come 'on-line' for more and more people, and patterns of leisure consumption change and evolve, traditional British television is destined to experience the same displacement that radio and film underwent in the 50s – when television supplanted them. Soon, with large numbers of channels provided by digital broadcasting, traditional terrestrial television (or rather the three or four channels most of us have grown up with) will just be a tiny few among a range of entertainments available in the home, including videos, video games, the 'information superhighway', and digital-terrestrial, cable and satellite channels.

In the context of this changeable climate, it remains to be seen whether the government's new curbs on public broadcasting, even if they come into being – and they should be resisted with as much energy as possible – will be quite as important as would once have been the case when a nation sat down to share the experience of watching the box.

JERRY ON LINE #1

Peter Lydon – James Sillavan ©



'Guess what I'm wearing Jerry, I just had it sent up from Wardrobe. I'll give you a clue. It's cured my hay-fever, reduced my exposure to smog and it's finally turned me into something of a fashion item round here. Cough! Cough!! Cough!!! No, it's not a bat suit stupid.'

The business

● What a difference a film makes. Ever since Andrew Vajna split with his Carolco partner and fellow Hungarian Mario Kassar to set up Cinergi Productions, he's been the one to get the good press. Meanwhile the trade papers (not to mention this column) have been filled with gleeful speculation about the profligate habits and imminent financial downfall of Kassar, most recently in connection with the troubled Geena Davis swashbuckling epic *Cutthroat Island* (\$65, June 1995).

Vajna, by contrast, has gained a reputation for solid business craft: a series of medium-budget movies, some of which have performed well above expectations (*Tombstone*, for instance, which knocked the box-office stuffing out of the much higher-profile

down to \$5.25 by the time the Sylvester Stallone comic-book epic, which opened on 4 July, had completed its first soggy week in America's multiplexes.

Ground into the dust by both *Apollo 13*, which opened on the 4 July weekend, and Disney's *Pocahontas*, which went wide at the same time, *Judge Dredd* is the US box office's first summer turkey. Already heading out of court by the end of its third week, it was even outgunned by *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie*.

All this throws an ironical light on the claim by *Dredd* producer Charles M. Lippincott that Vajna was the only Hollywood producer not to blanch at the film's budget (a reported \$68 million).

Irony is not a quality much appreciated on Wall Street. Natwest Securities – which underwrote a recent Cinergi stock offering – revised its estimates (done on the basis of the original *Dredd* projections of \$100 million plus at the US box office) downwards from \$1.02 per Cinergi share in 1995 to a measly 8¢. *Dredd*'s performance, declared Natwest, would "effectively eliminate [Cinergi's] earnings for fiscal 1995."

I made myself a promise I wouldn't, but in the end, like everyone else, I have. So here's a teeny little Hugh Grant story.

Following reports of raucously bad behaviour during showings of the trailer for 'Nine Months' – a mug shot of the Grant character after he is arrested in the film caused a mixture of cheers and laughter, while the final on-screen image (the words 'Coming Soon') brought the house down – 20th Century Fox seem to have made a few minor changes to the movie. There is now no scene in which Grant's character – a yuppie who goes on the razzle because he is unable to deal with the fact that his girlfriend is pregnant – gets arrested and, as a result, no police mugshot.

And it's all doing very nicely, thank you, nestling just behind 'Apollo 13' in its first full week in release, well ahead of immediate competitors 'Under Siege II' and 'Species', and boasting by far the highest per-screen average of any major studio release. Whatever else she may have done, Divine certainly hasn't blown Hughie's Hollywood career.

● The belief that Hollywood execs are incapable of reading any box-office figures other than those published in *Variety* or *The Hollywood Reporter* has been decisively disproved by current French hit *La Haine*.

Mathieu Kassovitz's second feature, which won him the Best Director award at Cannes in May, is a kind of Parisian *Boyz N the Hood*: a violent but uncompromisingly sympathetic view of three disaffected youths living in one of the violence-prone *cités* (trendily-designed housing estates otherwise indistinguishable from those in Britain or the US) that encircle Paris.



An anti-cop success: the uncompromising French film 'La Haine'

Though hardly the only disaffected-youth film to be made in France recently, *La Haine* has proved staggeringly successful, with audience figures of over 1.6 million by mid-July, making it the fifth most successful film of the year in France so far, outdistancing *Disclosure* and a host of other big-budget Hollywood movies. And all this for a film without stars shot in black-and-white with a distinctly unpalatable message. "La Haine is an anti-cop film," says Kassovitz, "and I want it to be seen as such." A talking-point of *A Clockwork Orange* proportions in France, it has certainly lived up to Kassovitz's wish.

Scheduled on the last day of the Cannes Festival, *La Haine* aroused comparatively little interest from buyers, most of whom reckoned that audiences outside France wouldn't have a clue what the film was about and would care even less. But

someone at Miramax must have been keeping an eye on the French box-office figures in *Le Film Français* because, in the third week of July, as *La Haine* passed the one-and-a-half-million mark, they stepped in and bought it for the US.

Mr Busy feels bound to observe that, if they'd trusted what they saw in Cannes (where the buzz among art-house buyers who saw the film at its two pre-selection market screenings was very strong), they'd probably have got it for a lot less. Road tests of the sort Kassovitz's film has just had in France rarely come cheap.

If the French box-office is showing signs of reversing the trend of the late 80s and early 90s, when US films grabbed the lion's share (three of the top five films of '95 in France so far are local), things are looking a lot less bright in Germany. Make that brighter – if you're a distributor of US films.

With the economic miracle terminally



Uncommercial commerce: Klaus Maria Brandauer's 'Mario and the Magician'



'Judge Dredd': thumbs down from Natwest

Wyatt Earp), some well below (the Danny De Vito comedy, *Renaissance Man*, went straight to video in the UK). In the process, Cinergi has built up a reputation as a reliable company: not too flashy, not too staid, the ideal combination in today's Hollywood.

Unlike Kassar, who has stuck with the Carolco-style 'event' movie (*Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, *Total Recall*, *Basic Instinct*), Vajna has produced such action pictures as *Die Hard* with a Vengeance and *Judge Dredd* alongside more up-market efforts, notably the screen version of *The Scarlet Letter*, directed by Roland Joffé and starring Demi Moore and Gary Oldman, plus Oliver Stone's *Nixon*, both of which are now in post-production.

Indifferently reviewed, the latest *Die Hard* movie nonetheless did pretty much what was expected of it: projections at time of writing were that it would take around \$105 million at the North American box-office, and the odds are that it will do even better around the world. But the release of *Judge Dredd* in the US has seriously dented Vajna's reputation, not to mention Cinergi's stock price. This stood at \$7.25 per share BD (Before *Dredd*, i.e. at the end of June), but was

dented by Reunification and the recession, there has recently been a lot of hard-talking in German industry circles about the need to encourage commercial movies rather than laudable but little-seen art films – the kind of cultural stance, in other words, that goes with current conservative economic thinking throughout Europe.

The days of the New German Cinema are so long-gone by now that the word 'New' is about as accurate as the word 'Rapid' in 'Rapid Reaction Force'. And the German Filmförderungsanstalt (the Federal subsidy board, or FFA, which accounts for around 20 per cent of all film funding) has built up a pretty terrible reputation over the past two decades, dishing out DM218 (£99) million, and getting back only DM15 (£6.8) million from the box-office revenue of the films it supported – a return rate of under seven per cent. Producers have to start repaying their loans proportionally when a film has taken 20 per cent of its budget at the box office, so a seven per cent return doesn't suggest a particularly healthy interest by German filmgoers in German films.

Last year, the FFA decided that the time had come to stop being art-film-oriented and start backing potentially commercial movies. Like almost every European subsidy board that has tried this trick, the FFA has fallen flat on its face in the process. After all, if spotting commercial movies was that easy, Europe would be full of rich producers. In case you're wondering, it isn't: they just dress flashily.

Top of the past year's German flops has been Klaus Maria Brandauer's 'Mario und der Zauberer' ('Mario and the Magician'), a Franco-German-Austrian co-production starring Julian Sands and Brandauer himself in a movie version of Thomas Mann's novel. The film got DM1.8 million (£820,000) from the FFA and DM10 (£4.5) million from other state bodies. Released by Senator for last year's Christmas market, it has been seen by less than 150,000 Germans – what you'd expect for a limited release of a mid-range art movie.

Indeed, for all the comments of "About time, too" that greeted the FFA's change of tack, it has been the distinctively German auteur-type films that have scored at the box office recently, most notably Sönke Wortmann's 'Der bewegte Mann' (provisional English title: 'Pretty Baby'), a comedy of sexual manners based on two gay comic books but with a rather more heterosexual focus in the film version. That has been seen by nearly six million Germans, putting it in the 'Forrest Gump' league.

Judging it not particularly commercial, the FFA reckoned it was worth only DM600,000 (£275,000) in subsidies – a third of what went to 'Mario und der Zauberer'.

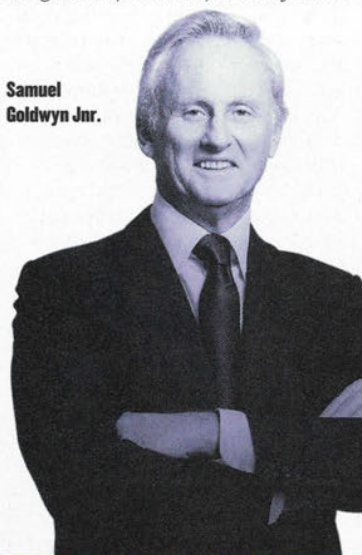
● Following the financial problems of the Samuel Goldwyn Company discussed here last month (S&S, August), things have been going from bad to worse. Who's to say where they will be when this column is published?

Goldwyn at first struggled valiantly to raise funds by going into business with a European partner – a move which would have made cultural sense, given the company's link-ups

with European productions, including *The Madness of King George*. But the idea obviously did not appeal to those European entertainment companies with deep enough pockets to consider a rescue (a list which would have had to include Germany's Bertelsmann and Kirchgruppe, France's Canal + and possibly Italy's RCS). Getting nowhere, Goldwyn finally put itself up for sale just before the 4 July weekend in the US and trading in company stock was suspended.

Possible buyers are thought to be Turner Broadcasting System (which already owns Castle Rock and New Line), Viacom (which owns Paramount), Seagram (which recently bought MCA/Universal) and PolyGram.

Samuel Goldwyn Jnr.



LONDON NOTES British margins

"In the film industry profitability is dependent on accessing the distribution margin," said the President of PolyGram Filmed Entertainment, Michael Kuhn, to the National Heritage Select Committee last year.

Which is presumably why Channel 4 have entered the increasingly crowded UK arena with Film Four Distribution, the latest attempt to cash in on a perceived upturn in the fortunes of British film. Given the recent success of films they have money invested in, it seems a great opportunity to keep more of it for themselves.

But what concerns some is the risk they are taking. As veterans know, it is alarmingly easy to lose vast sums. As they prepare for their first release, *Blue Juice*, nervous executives will be watching closely.

Blue Juice, to be released on 15 September, is just one of six high-profile British movies to be released in a period of four weeks, competing for attention with Electric's *The Young*

Only the last-named (which already owns such indie outfits as Propaganda Films and Working Title) would seem to offer much chance of preserving the Goldwyn identity, which is largely unchanged since Sam Senior used to run the company, focusing on prestige productions, often of adapted plays or novels (*American Buffalo* is currently in production, while *Angels and Insects* premiered at Cannes).

The plan for a joint distribution venture in the UK with Film Four International has been dropped for the time being, though FFI is continuing with the idea on its own.

One Goldwyn project which proceeds is the new TV series of 'Flipper' (the company's TV arm, which invented 'American Gladiators', was never quite so prestige-oriented), much of which will be shot in Australia, thanks to a link-up with Village Roadshow Pictures.

Cultural observers will have noted that, every time someone has an idea in the entertainment business these days, someone else can be guaranteed to have had it already (what Mr Busy calls the 'Rob Roy'/'Braveheart' syndrome). And so, sure enough, a movie about the antics of the same adorable dolphin began shooting this summer in Florida, starring Paul Hogan, Elijah Wood (soon to be seen in that pre-'Waterworld' Kevin Costner effort, *The War*) and Chelsea Field, who got some practice on the fin front as the mother of the child who adopts a seal in 'Andre'.

Mr Busy would just like to say to all you cultural studies gurus out there who make a living by observing trends in popular



From Sigourney to Snow White

entertainment: Give up! Hollywood is so desperate to find a franchise these days that any trend you care to mention will be in the video remainder bins by the time you can get your prediction into print.

● Such as, for instance, live-action-plus-animated remakes of all our favourite Disney movies. First off the block will be *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*, with Glenn Close tipped as Cruella de Vil and, best of all, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, with Sigourney Weaver in the first-mentioned title role. Those in search of subjects for their doctoral theses might like to consider the similarities in narrative structure between *Snow White* and *Alien*, with reference to the *Snow White/Ripley* nexus.

Poisoner's Handbook and PolyGram's *Carrington*. Buena Vista will be opening Peter Chelsom's *Funny Bones*; while in October, Artificial Eye will be releasing both Ken Loach's *Land and Freedom* and Terence Davies' *The Neon Bible*.

The relevant PR people are keen to stress that these films are not necessarily competing for the same audience. Artificial Eye will be hoping that *Land and Freedom* will cross over from its art-house roots: at last the Loach film which works in the multiplexes. *The Neon Bible* will very much be pitched at their established art-house audience. Channel 4 will want *Blue Juice* to capture a hip young crossover audience, as *Shallow Grave* did, and as *The Young Poisoner's Handbook* would like to. *Carrington* should play successfully to the audience who traditionally support quality period drama.

The biggest publicity, and probably the biggest audience, will be for *Funny Bones*. With its lack of name stars this might have been considered an art-

house film a few years ago. Buena Vista seem convinced that these days with their money and good word-of-mouth, it can be a big hit for them.

This temporary glut is surely not ideal. In whose interest is it that all six are being released at once? If companies are second-guessing one another, they are playing for high stakes. Something will have to give, unless audiences really have abandoned their distrust of British films.

Whether a film is successful or not, the distributor must pay the print and advertising costs, which can run to hundreds of thousands of pounds. And must secure national media coverage.

It is worth recalling that of the 38 films released in Britain last year "involving a UK partner", fewer than ten apparently involved a UK audience. So which will be this year's *Four Weddings*, and which will be the *Dark Summer* (total box office revenue: £744)? It's a risky business. Nick Thomas

APOLLO

AND NEWT

'Apollo 13' has been seized on enthusiastically by US politicians right and left. Martin Walker explores the appeal of the filmic Space Race to the likes of Gingrich and Clinton



Lost in space: Tom Hanks as Jim Lovell in 'Apollo 13', re-enacting the 1970 moon mission that nearly didn't come back

UNIVERSAL/JOHN BATZDORFF

● In a single month, from 7 July to 5 August this year, three US space shuttle missions were launched from Cape Canaveral. This unprecedented burst of hyperactivity was timed to accompany the opening of *Apollo 13*, the Tom Hanks film of the moon mission which almost failed to return. The best publicity vehicle NASA has known in decades, the film was given unheard-of co-operation from the space agency. To film the zero-gravity sequences the film-makers were allowed to use NASA's own weightlessness training aircraft, known as the "Vomit Comet" for its effects on digestion. NASA provided 600 runs aboard the windowless KC-135, which soars and dives in great swoops in the sky, offering 23 seconds of weightlessness on each arc. Supervised by Apollo 13 mission commander Dave Scott, the actors underwent astronaut training, used the altitude chamber at the Houston space centre, and finally trained on the flight simulators at the US Space Camp at Huntsville, Alabama. NASA provided facilities and consultants to ensure that the lunar landing module looked right and the in-space lavatory sequence was authentic.

NASA knew what was coming with the movie, building new stands at the launch sites for the crowds they were sure it would attract. And they rushed to bring a new Mission Control Centre online, so that the old one could be the centre-piece of its new museum. Yes, folks, you can now stand at the very place where they first heard the words "Houston, the Eagle has landed."

Given the way *Apollo 13* has seized the public imagination in the US, punters might be even more thrilled to know that this was also the precise spot where, in 1970, Commander Jim Lovell's chilling line was first heard: "Er, Houston, we have a problem." And just across the vast room is the very blackboard where Mission Controller Gene Kranz gritted his teeth and said, "We've never lost an American in space, and we sure as hell aren't gonna lose one on my watch."

And if Hollywood can be rallied to the cause, NASA sure ain't gonna lose its space programme to budget cuts. Already running on less than half of the budget of the glory days of the Apollo missions, and slated to lose even more, along with 55,000 jobs from its own ranks and its civilian contractors, NASA is fighting for its institutional life. And the film explains how to fight most effectively, mobilising public support by hauling in the punters.

As Hanks and the boys take off aboard Apollo 13 and start some laborious joking for the big audience back there in TV-land, his wife and children and his mother in her old folks' home all realise to their dismay that the television networks aren't screening it. Prime time is not interested. Just two flights on from Apollo 11 and the original moon landing, the viewers are bored with just another ho-hum routine flight to the moon. But then an oxygen tank bursts, the lives of three astronauts are in dire peril, and America tunes back in for the deathwatch.

So now, at a production cost of \$51 million (a quarter of it Hanks' fee), NASA and Hollywood jointly present 'Deathwatch: the movie'. And America is flocking to the box office to see history made real, as only Hollywood can.

NASA put up with some distortions of history

in the film. There was no row between the astronauts, like the one which Hanks breaks up between his two overwrought colleagues. And the astronaut who was pulled off the flight at the last minute, suspected of exposure to measles, was not the sole author of the ingenious plan to suck back battery power from the lunar module to get the capsule home. No matter: it's a great role for Gary Sinise, who made his name alongside Hanks in *Forrest Gump*, a film which reworked the 60s and 70s into a wholesome and fundamentally comforting morality tale.

But the most intriguing feature of *Forrest Gump* was what it chose to leave out. In the novel from which the film was drawn, Gump is recruited into the US space programme, sent into space, and crashes down to a cannibal island whose chess-playing chieftain is a Yale graduate. The excision of this sequence saddened Hanks, whose strongest recollection of the 60s is of the space flights. He festooned his boyhood bedroom with astronaut pin-ups, and claims still to be able to recite the names of all the Apollo crews.

"I followed the space programme heavily when I was a kid," Hanks explains. "Apollo 11, of

The first full screening of 'Apollo 13' took place at the White House, at Clinton's request. Then in a speech on "Responsible Citizenship and the American Community", he cited the film repeatedly

course, that was the one the whole world stood still for. But I sort of stood still for each one of those Apollo missions."

America has never really recovered from the extraordinary decade which followed the assassination of Kennedy. The war in Vietnam, the war at home, the burning of Watts and Detroit, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, the shootings at Kent State, all ending in the final squalor of Watergate. But America did one thing gloriously right. It said it would put a man on the moon, and it did. And the triumph was all the sweeter for finally reversing the humiliations of 1957, when the Soviet Sputnik had beaten American technology into orbit, and 1961, when Yuri Gagarin had beaten Americans themselves into space.

There is something about the current American mood which makes the 25-year-old success of the Apollo missions and the Apollo rescue politically important. The first full screening of *Apollo 13* took place at the White House, at the President's request. Then in a long speech to his old university, Georgetown, on "Responsible Citizenship and the American Community", Clinton cited *Apollo 13* repeatedly. It was an example of the American ability to overcome mortal challenge. It was proof that technology could be a friend, not a threat. It was a memory of a time

when "middle-class values" were not in question. And Clinton said he had found inspiration for America's future in a crucial phrase in the movie: "Failure is not an option."

It is unusual for a movie to enter the political discourse this way. But politicians cannot stay away from this emblem of an America that did things right. Republican Speaker Newt Gingrich (the other Vietnam draft-evading baby-boomer on whom US politics now hinges) finds the film "glorious - an inspiration".

"It's an amazingly wonderful movie, and it's a movie about Americanism and about the notion of a team that faces a huge crisis and people work all day, every day, and they finally find a way to solve it by the narrowest of margins, and of very calm courage and of the kind of heroism that Eisenhower described as being held by the young men who landed at Normandy. And it is a remarkable kind of thing," Gingrich gushed, in the course of 'a major foreign policy speech' in Washington this July.

He has always felt this way about Space. One of the first bills he introduced as a young congressman in 1981 was a National Space Act, to "set forth provisions for the government of space territories, including constitutional protections, the right to self-government and admission to (US) statehood." Gingrich once told me that the two books that most influenced him were Arnold Toynbee's ten-volume *History of the World*, on the rise and fall of the world's civilisations, and Isaac Asimov's sci-fi classic *Foundation* series, which does for galactic empires what Toynbee did for earth. The first sci-fi tale that seized young Gingrich's imagination was Robert Heinlein's *The Man Who Sold the Moon*, one of a series of stories in which Heinlein promoted the values of free market capitalism. Heinlein's best work in the genre, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, was a set book in Gingrich's college course, and its tale of the free market moonfolk threatening to bombard earth with rocks to win their right to self-determination pointed to a potential constitutional dilemma which Gingrich's National Space Act was designed to resolve.

In the 50s, the sci-fi right saw Space as the utopia where their dreams could be fulfilled, while earth was too sullied by the welfare and corporate states to be of much use for anything but a launching platform. And once aloft, it would be run by "Starship Troopers" (to invoke another Heinlein novel), along the model of the US Marine Corps, treating Space as a new frontier to be tamed and settled as if it were a galactic version of the American West.

Unlike most of us - who may have read these things but grew out of them - Gingrich remains a believer, in the fictional form as in the underlying ideology. He has just published one alternative history novel, *1945*, in which Hitler does not make the mistake of declaring war on the USA after Pearl Harbor, and is working on another in which a wimpish US president is overawed by a sinister Japan armed with Star Wars, until the nation is saved by a tough and visionary leader of the opposition in Congress.

Gingrich has two co-authors. For *1945*, he picked William Forstchen, better known for his work in the "Starship Troopers" genre. And for *The Faction*, the novel still being written, he ►

◀ picked Jerry Pournelle, who likes to be known as Heinlein's heir. Pournelle, a conservative of the old guard, used to advocate winning the Vietnam War with nuclear weapons back when Apollo 13 was being wheeled to the launch pad.

And it is significant that (as far as I can discover) Gingrich cites only one other movie which has inspired him as metaphor and life lesson: *Sands of Iwo Jima*, with John Wayne, in which a tough Marine platoon sergeant lets himself become disliked as he gives his men vital training – and is then killed in the battle as they start to understand why.

It is useful to record this intellectual history, which has helped propel a sci-fi fan right to the top of American politics, because it relates directly to the policies that Gingrich promotes (although it's dispiriting that his cultural roots are so undemanding).

"Our Nation's newborn space enterprises may soon fall behind the Europeans and the Japanese," Gingrich warns. "We will have lost our lead because we did not have the foresight to make a sound economic investment in our future – and because we thought Apollo was a circus stunt."

Gingrich wants to get back to the Apollo era, with men returning to the moon and setting forth for Mars. He sees "the big idea, the grand project" of space exploration as the glue to hold together the Western alliance of the US, Europe and Japan in the post-cold war years. But he does not want the kind of organised national effort that could give Big Government a good name. He wants, in effect, a privatised NASA, which he dismisses as "a people-heavy, obsolescent bureaucracy that has got to learn a whole lot of new techniques and new technologies. We ought to start changing it tomorrow morning."

Naturally, it was just this proof that government could do things right which Bill Clinton hailed in his own lavish praise of the Apollo film. In short, the effect of the film has been not only to provide politicians on both sides with a text on which they can parade their patriotism and technological pride, but also a symbol on which they can define their differences.

But it is on a shrunken and introspective and deeply nostalgic American political stage that *Apollo 13* now plays its metaphoric role, a trope far diminished from Buckminster Fuller's grand concept of Spaceship Earth. There is a deftly worked sub-plot in the film, about the rebellious young teenage daughter of Lovell, who plays Jefferson Airplane in her room and doesn't want to watch Daddy on television. But from Grace Slick's "One pill makes you larger and one pill makes you



As it was: the real Apollo 13 team

small," she is redeemed back to the family bosom, to loyalty and to American pride by her father's travail. "Remember what the dormouse said – feed your head," the song 'White Rabbit' went. Instead, this daughter returns to duty.

The role of women in this film is to watch and wait, and look jolly brave to help inspire a troubled nation while their males do what men must do. And it is here that the *Apollo 13* metaphor gains its real political force. In the *Washington Post*, the critic John Powers put it acutely: "Its story line could be a Republican parable about 1995 America – a marvellous vessel loses its power and speeds towards extinction, until it is saved by a team of heroic white men. I can imagine the political commercials in which Hanks morphs into Phil Gramm."

It is on a shrunken political stage that 'Apollo 13' now plays a metaphoric role far diminished from the once grand concept of Spaceship Earth

Americans are uncomfortable with ideologies, and prefer instead to cast their political projects in terms of missions, whether it be the settlement of the West, the containment of Communism, the creation of a global free trade system, or a new venture in space. But inspired by Hollywood's brilliant re-enactment of one shining moment in an era of otherwise ailing Americanism, Gingrich is drafting something that we can only call an ideology, especially as we can identify a clear precursor.

There is another recent charismatic leader whose project brought together a mystic sense of patriotism, cultural superiority and national destiny, to which the people would be rallied by grandiose public works projects of a militarised form. And this precursor also made much of family values, of traditional social disciplines, as the national rock on which the glorious high-tech future would be soundly constructed.

Gingrich, in short, is an American version of De Gaulle, and the ideology he is defining is a free-market, high-tech Gaullism. And like De Gaulle, Gingrich is fuelled by an extraordinary force of resentment, that the nation has somehow let itself down, and been let down by its so-

called allies. In De Gaulle and in Gingrich, there is a common need to expunge a national shame; whether France's defeat in 1940 or what Gingrich sees as the relentless cultural defeats America has suffered since the 60s.

"People like me are what stand between us and Auschwitz. I see evil around me every day. We are at the edge of losing this civilisation. Two more generations of what we had for the last 20 years and we're in desperate trouble", Gingrich explained last year. "I don't want my daughter and my wife raped and killed. I don't want to see my neighbourhood destroyed."

However short and Hollywood-tinged the American memory might be, they know that this is guff, that Gingrich's golden years before the 60s were not nearly so pleasant to experience at the time as they are to recall. They were marked by segregated schools, cowed and domesticated women, corporate disciplines and a generally censorious culture which jerked spasmodically into the extremes of McCarthyism, book-banning and lynching. To his credit, Clinton referred to some of this during his own Apollo 13 speech, recalling that no blacks were allowed at his own Arkansas school.

Where Clinton and Gingrich and thus the US political mainstream come together is in the use of Apollo 13 as a displacement mechanism. This is what Gingrich and Clinton and Tom Hanks choose to remember of their formative periods, and what Hollywood ensures that America gets.

So amid tourist crowds not seen for a generation, the history and the future of the US space programme came together for the thrusting ascent of the Discovery space shuttle on 13 July. And then they parted. The launch and ascent and the deployment of a new satellite was managed by the old Houston space centre, with its ranked tiers of terminals and consoles all linked to a single Cray super-computer. But then, as the astronauts prepared themselves for sleep, that old control centre passed into history, handing over to a new Houston Mission Control, an array of 200 separate work stations, linked together by 130,000 feet of fibre optics.

Houston thus entered Newt's techno dream, the age of the personal computer, albeit the world's largest and most powerful fibre optic LAN, or local area network. The onward march of technology helped condemn the old Mission Control to the spanking new museum and visitor centre. It will be less an icon of American history than a totem pole to a spurious but venerated vision of the past.

Interestingly, it went on display in the same week that the Smithsonian Museum in Washington opened its Enola Gay exhibit, of the bomber which carried the atom bomb to Hiroshima. After protests from veterans' groups, conservative Congressmen and Mr Gingrich, the initial exhibit had been stripped of the discussions of the morality of the bombing, and of the effects on the victims. One of the excised items was a citation from President Eisenhower's memoirs that "Japan was already defeated and dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary." But he was a President who made history rather than one who sought simply to exploit its re-inventions.

'Apollo 13' opens on 22 September and is reviewed on page 42 of this issue



American teamwork: the crew as portrayed in 'Apollo 13'

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SPACE LOOKS

Stella Bruzzi views space costumes, real and imagined

● In a very clear sense the demythologisation of Space occurred on 20 July 1969, the magical day Apollo 11's moon capsule, the Eagle, landed on the Sea of Tranquility, because it was at this moment that Space became a real rather than just a fictional entity. Space before Apollo 11 belonged to the realm of the extravagant imagination, not yet compromised by the hard evidence of moon dust and fuzzy pictures; from Ariosto's Renaissance epic *Orlando Furioso*, which charts Astolfo's horse-drawn journey to an earth-like moon, with lakes, cities and castles, to Kubrick's trippy 1968 vision of the future in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Space could be what you wanted it to be. The "Space Age" as a term in effect refers to a time when Space was just that – a space, an enticing void on an incomplete map ready to be filled in.

Forbidden Planet (1956) gives one of the most

complete pictures in cinema of Space: the planet is a perfect, uncharted fantasy landscape, terra-formed to suit recognisably human needs and desires. Part of this fantasy is the invention of a space look, very much referring in style to other images of futuristic travellers: the grey, functional militaristic uniforms that borrow liberally from the American armed forces, from the men-in-tights of Robin Hood movies, and even from cowboys.

The more expressive part of Fred McLeod Wilcox's fantasy is related to what the planet symbolises. This reworking of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* concocts a simple utopianism, a vibrant contemporary vision of a Garden of Eden before the Fall, where tigers are not aggressive, robots are pacifists and women are innocently ignorant of their own sexuality. Even *Star Trek*, despite the adolescent delight taken in such

LAIKA THE DOG

Laika (Russian for "Barker") was the first living creature to orbit beyond Earth's atmosphere, lifting off on 3 November 1957 in a modified Sputnik II capsule. She was a space-age gimmick, but also uncomfortable proof that the Americans had been beaten in one crucial cold-war race. Following repeated unsuccessful US launches (dubbed "Kaputnik" and "Floppnik" by the press), the success of Laika's ten-day voyage was, incongruously, what spurred Eisenhower into creating NASA in October 1958. This mongrel in a Sputnik was only one of several Russian firsts, which included the first man in space, the first woman and the first space walk. Lasse Hallström's *My Life as a Dog* dwells on the poignancy of Laika's plight (that she died in flight, the Russians having not made any provision for bringing her safely back to earth), but her strategic importance went far beyond this.



YURI GAGARIN

On 12 April 1961 Yuri Gagarin, in his Vostok 1 capsule, became the world's first (human) star voyager, beating Alan Shepard by less than a month. Gagarin, an ace fighter pilot, was an immediate hero, winning the "unprecedented duel with nature" he talked of just prior to lift-off – a mythic status which was cemented by his early death in 1968 during a training plane accident. Trapped in this cumbersome, primitive looking helmet – with part of the ominous CCCP clearly visible – he does not conform to the gleaming icon of popular imagination. In both documentary and fictional space iconography the wearing of the fishbowl rarely denotes heroism, and the Mercury and Apollo astronauts almost invariably appear in official photographs



without them or perhaps holding them. In films, the bubble's clumsiness is comic: intentionally in *The Reluctant Astronaut* (1967), unintentionally in *Destination Moon* (1950), where it resembles a fashionable 1950s "mushroom" TV set.

THE RIGHT STUFF (Philip Kaufman, 1983)

Although the magnificent seven of the Mercury programme were disparagingly labelled "spam in a can" by test-pilot and former colleague Chuck Yeager (because they had no control over their vehicle), they were presented, in their luminous uniformity, as embodying a masculine ideal. Ace pilots have long been defined and self-defined as the manliest of all, a mythical fraternity who risk more, go further, and often go it alone. Both *The Right Stuff* and *Top Gun* (1986) were made during a decade which films like *American Gigolo* (1980) and *Raging Bull* (1980) had begun by questioning such masculinity; both are making a case for the myth. After being subjected to strenuous and protracted physical tests those selected for the Mercury programme were ceremoniously unveiled to the world, as quintessential American heroes: not only did they seem to possess the "right stuff", but they were ace



navy or airforce pilots, college educated and married. Uniforms are both functional and symbolic: functional because they denote the suppression of individuality to a group with common objectives, symbolic because of what they can mean to those outside the group. The film's space suits are idealised versions of what the Mercury Seven actually wore: they are thinner, more elegant than the bloated originals (being minus the necessary pressure suit), the straps are looser and the boots are not ill-matched black or white.

SOLARIS (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972)

'Solaris' is space made mundane; Tarkovsky said his plan was to film a space landing "the way they film a tram-stop in an ordinary film." This is the antithesis of previous space and



science-fiction traditions, from the early European futurism of *Aelita* (1924) and *Metropolis* (1926) to the operations of *2001*, a film to which *Solaris* is often compared. The 1960s saw a re-emergence of interest in science fiction in European art cinema, with such films as Godard's *Alphaville* (1965), but Tarkovsky's depressive, downbeat approach to the myth of space travel perhaps owes more to the emphasis on the everyday seen in earlier neo-realist and new wave films. This stark and deflating vision pervades the *mise en scène*, as the station is presented as chaotic, run-down and silent, and Kris Kelvin – the 'hero' – is depicted arriving there in a scruffy, eclectic blend of 1970s and futuristic clothes, again demonstrating the potential ordinariness of space travel. Just how far removed this star voyager is from the idealised image is underlined by the juxtaposition with the unused conventional space suit hanging in the cupboard.

BUCK ROGERS (Ford Beebe & Saul Goodkind, 1939)

An essential part of the comic book's and adventure cinema's representation of masculinity is the dressing of the male body. Unlike the semi-naked Tarzan, such comic-strip action heroes as Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon, Superman and Batman were clothed, but in a genre-specific way. The emphasis in these examples is on tight clothing (often clearly synthetic, as befits futuristic fantasies) which hugs specifically the torso and thighs and thus accentuates muscularity, which is further highlighted, commonly, by the contrast between thin tights and thick, functional boots. The origins for the costumes in this particular brand of derring-do movies are eclectic, from the sculpted armour of Roman centurions to the swashbuckling men-in-tights look of Robin Hood. Its influence can be seen in such space series as *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*. The presence of figure-clinging clothes as opposed to nakedness identifies the heroes as men of action, not merely objects of desire, up to the vested Bruce Willis in *'Die Hard'* and Keanu Reeves in *'Speed'*.



VOYAGE TO THE MOON (Voyage dans la lune, Georges Méliès, 1902)

Like the other arts, cinema had the potential to fantasise the moon before reality intruded to break the spell: imagination preceded fact. As intriguing, though, is that the science-fiction aspects of these experimental films also predict or anticipate much later real events. Fritz Lang believed, for example, that the countdown from ten to one that he used in *'The Girl in the Moon'* (*'Frau im Mond'*) in 1929

trivial details as Uhura's earpiece, the communicators and the Captain's log, displays a certain ideological idealism, not least through the multiculturalism of the Enterprise's crew, so literally represented by their names and races. *2001* is the ultimate significant expression of the imaginative potential of Space, and the last time that fantasies of what it might represent could be indulged without being too troubled by reality. Coming a year before the 1969 moonlanding, *2001*'s vision of Space as not just the final frontier but the final trip into both the outer and the inner realms is the last orchestration of its grand potential: the bubble was about to burst.

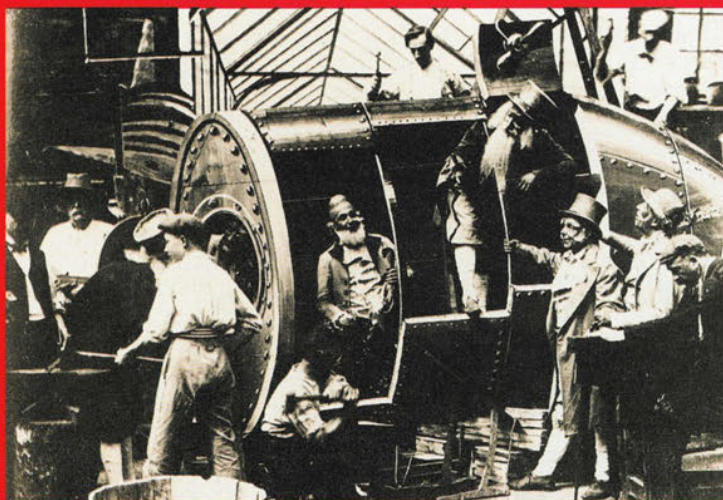
Most screen depictions of Space since the six moonlandings have exploited the distance between reality and myth: among them *Silent Running* (Douglas Trumbull, 1971) and *Capricorn*

One (Peter Hyams, 1977), the ultimate depressive, paranoid fantasy about the discovery that the first manned flight to Mars is a hoax. In both Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972) and Lucas' *Star Wars* (1977) the spaceships are tinged with a scruffy and chaotic Aeroflot grimness, a deterioration that is underlined by references to a previous golden age of Space movies. Kris Kelvin's journey to the Solaris station is a shrugging joke at the expense of legendary beam-me-ups and special effects, as all we see is his face swaying about against a starry background, whilst *Star Wars* opens with a car-boot sale of old robots and equipment at which R2D2 only gets selected because the first robot Luke Skywalker picked blew up.

Apollo 13 rather grimly proves the paucity of the post-anticlimax vision by simply replacing Outer Space with Inner Space: panic supplants

the derring-do of old and the *mise en scène* is dominated by the inside of the capsule, not the infinity beyond.

The film is also peppered with references to the equally fact-based *The Right Stuff* (1983) – the casting of Ed Harris (as Gene Kranz) being the most blatant. In *The Right Stuff*, Harris had played John Glenn, the first man to orbit the earth. Harris-as-Glenn is awestruck by the beauty of the expansive view from his window. What gives *The Right Stuff* its sardonic majesty is that it can remain ironic while evoking the importance of the 1960s Space Programme and that decade's belief in heroism and the mystique of the star voyager. Part of "the right stuff" is being able to marvel; the button pushers of *Apollo 13* just don't have it. It's a bleak prospect when *Apollo*'s aborted mission can be described as "NASA's finest hour".



not only predated NASA's, but was borrowed by them. Similar parallels are to be found between 'Voyage to the Moon' and reality: for example, the use of a rocket to launch the travellers into space (although in the film it is propelled by a cannon), the splashdown re-entry and the public welcome as heroes that they receive.

FORBIDDEN PLANET (Fred McLeod Wilcox, 1956) In the cold-war infested America of the 1950s, paranoias and fantasies of conquering and being conquered abounded. The reverse of the space travel dream was the invasion nightmare. In such films as 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' (1956) and 'It Came from Outer Space' (1953) the terror was of our normality being taken over by alien forces. The reassuring antidote was represented by Space Conquest movies. 'Forbidden Planet', with its Sirkian colours and recognisably fashionable open-plan interiors, exemplifies the desire to imaginatively contain and domesticate space. Robby the Robot, the ultimate 1950s modern convenience, is a safe, idealised alien: an anthropomorphic, pacifist, cuddly Bibendum who is more astronaut than alien. Altaira, who has abandoned her bolder, short-skirted, female space-traveller clothes, is rendered similarly unthreatening in her curiously old-fashioned, ostentatious-but-demure 1930s evening

dress. There are striking parallels to be drawn between Robby, in his potential relationship to Altaira, and such women-snatching monsters as King Kong or Frankenstein: but here also the potential danger such images suggest is defused and desexualised.



STAR TREK (Gene Roddenberry, 1966)

'Star Trek', which began in 1966, came at a time when Fashion – with its emphasis on man-made and metallic textiles in the collections of Paco Rabanne and others – had gone "Space Age". Kids continued to plead



well into the 1970s for a pair of 'Star Trek' pyjamas. The Trekkie look is definitively 1960s, meshing together the beehive, the mini, tight trousers and glitter (for the distinctive boomerang logo on each crew member's chest and the military stripes at the bottom of the sleeves). The key design item is the half-way-up-the-calf boot, by now conventionalised as essential gear for those venturing into the galaxy. Oddly, these give the men an air of the Cossack, but then this too had become part of the tradition, as the baggies tucked into boots modelled by Leslie Nielsen and crew in 'Forbidden Planet' confirm.

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY (Stanley Kubrick, 1968)

When people have ceased to ponder the meaning of the final scenes, '2001' will be remembered as the film that put the detail into space, and depicted future travel as a clear extension of the present. The stewardess' grip shoe was practical rather than fantastical (resembling, for instance, another readily available 1970s accessory, the sea slipper). As it imagines and fetishises



future travel, '2001' builds up a memorable collection of space accessories and gadgets, including liquefied food, video telephones and protective padded stewardess hats. The future is thus a time when the extraordinary will seem normal.

APOLLO 13 (Ron Howard, 1995)

Three Apollo astronauts walking the gantry to their capsule is a classic men-at-work scene, but several ironies undermine this intention. One is that as space travel became more sophisticated and the astronauts got closer to the moon, so they visually regressed into infancy and became increasingly vulnerable: their suits echo a baby's padded all-in-one,



making the attached tube and equipment box they have to carry with them seem like an umbilical cord and a placenta. Constrained by their gear, the men who landed on the moon behaved increasingly like toddlers: jumping, go-carting and playing make-believe golf. When the womb-like space capsule malfunctions, the womb becomes a trap. Films frequently exaggerate the spaceship's claustrophobia to signal imminent disaster, as in '2001' when Bowman and Poole are trying to hide from the deteriorating HAL, or in 'Marooned', John Sturges' film about a malfunctioning Apollo capsule, which unknowingly anticipated the aborted Apollo 13 mission and was coincidentally released the very week the real capsule was struggling to return to earth.

● The location is tacky beyond anything the most brilliant production designer could have devised: a grimy beauty salon hidden away one floor above street level in a corner of Tsimshatsui, Hong Kong's tourist centre. Hard to say if the lurid green walls and coloured light bulbs are authentic 60s tat, or represent a forlorn 70s attempt to catch up with fashion; either way, nothing has been done to mitigate the massive wear and tear of the intervening decades. Wong Kar-Wai and his designer William Chang have chosen this place as a setting for a killing in Wong's new film *Fallen Angel*. It's two o'clock on a hot April night, and the place is crowded with Indian extras: mostly men, but also a few women and one babe-in-arms whose father is fussing around anxiously wondering when they can go to bed. The hitman played by singer Leon Lai bursts in, causing the Indians to scatter in panic before one of them is gunned down. When I ask Wong Kar-Wai about the scene he's shooting, he grins and says, "Tonight, I'm doing John Woo."

Two months later I catch up with the unit once again, this time shooting in a decrepit apartment building in the back streets of Wanchai with two of the film's other stars, Takeshi Kaneshiro (Cop #223 in *Chungking Express*) and Charlie Young (the mysterious silent girl in *Ashes of Time*). Young is rampaging through the building in search of someone, bawling threats up and down the fire-escape stairs; Kaneshiro plays her mute sidekick, backing up her anger with guttural noises and gestures of violence. Again it's in the small hours, and not surprisingly the residents are complaining about the noise. The scene turns out to be a retake of material already shot once; the difference being that the cinematographer this time is the increasingly masterly Chris Doyle, who shot *Days of Being Wild*, *Ashes of Time* and most of *Chungking Express*, but had to stop working on *Fallen Angel* in April when he was called to Shanghai to resume work on Chen Kaige's new film. Wong wasn't satisfied by most of the stuff shot by fill-in cameramen; hence a hastily arranged schedule of retakes. The film is supposed to premiere in Taiwan at the end of July.

However *Fallen Angel* turns out, Wong is already well established alongside Stanley Kwan as one of the few distinctive and original authors in Hong Kong cinema. Public interest in his movies has fluctuated alarmingly (*Days of Being Wild* was a major flop on first release, *Ashes of Time* was a financial disappointment relative to cast and cost, *Chungking Express* was a surprise hit), but his critical standing has risen steadily, as has his international reputation. One obvious reason for his erratic box-office performance is that, like Kwan, he seems more comfortable away from genre than suits the taste of the Hong Kong audience. Another is that his predilection for casting top stars against type or in unusual roles flouts industry wisdom. But stars queue up to work with Wong Kar-Wai. In a film industry notorious for the sketchy and amateurish nature of its training, many actors see Wong as a director who can bring out their best.

Chungking Express (Chongqing Senlin, 1994), which tells two separate stories linked more by theme and mood than narrative line, seems the polar opposite of the films which precede and fol-

POET OF TIME

Much lauded by Quentin Tarantino, 'Chungking Express' is soon to be released in Britain. Director Wong Kar-Wai talks to Tony Rayns on the set of his new film, 'Fallen Angel'

low it in his filmography, *Days of Being Wild* (A-Fei Zhengchuan, 1990/91) and *Ashes of Time* (Dong Xie Xi Du, 1994). The obsessed, embittered, haunted and intermittently hysterical characters of those movies seem a world away from the relatively relaxed modern city types who populate *Chungking Express*, their neuroses so unremarkable that they're as normal as you or me. But as he explains in the following interview, Wong sees the difference simply as one of degree. All of his characters are afflicted by the same problems of loneliness, insecurity and inability to commit; it's just that the ones in *Chungking Express* have found ways to cope which the others haven't.

The protagonists of both stories in *Chungking Express* are lovelorn cops ditched by their girlfriends. In the first story, Plain-Clothes Cop #223 (Takeshi Kaneshiro) is counting the days since his girlfriend gave him the push, a process which meshes in his mind with the countdown to his next birthday. Chance brings him into contact with a fascinating older woman (Brigitte Lin) with whom he spends a chaste night, unaware that she's a big-time heroin smuggler who has just shot an absconding drugs courier and will gun down her two-timing supplier next day. In the second story, Uniformed Cop #663 (Tony Leung) mopes at length over the fact that the air

hostess he succeeded in seducing at 35,000 feet has discovered choice and left him for another man. He is unaware that he is an object of intense romantic passion for the young woman (Faye Wong) who serves fast-food at the late-night snack bar where he stops for coffee, and even less aware that she is in the habit of entering his apartment while he's out, to clean and redecorate it. Both stories mix their romantic melancholy with a great deal of humour.

Wong turned director in 1988 to film his own script *As Tears Go By* (Wangjiao Kamen), originally intended as the first part of a trilogy by Patrick Tam. The film is an idiosyncratic riff on the plot and themes of *Mean Streets*, set in the Triad-ridden backstreets of Mongkok; the protagonist (Andy Lau) is an enigmatic hitman dragged into trouble time and time again, by his excitable 'disciple' (Jacky Cheung). It's Wong's most generic movie by far, but it's high-octane visuals and step-printed action climaxes set him several notches higher than the average Hong Kong gangster-movie director. The subsequent films have lifted him to another level entirely: he has become not only a supreme visual stylist but also a poet of the kinds of love that tear people apart... and just occasionally bring them back together again.

He is also a poet of time. No other director since the (distant) heyday of Alain Resnais has been so attuned to the effects of time on memory, sensation and emotion. Few other directors have ever imbued their movies with such a meta-physical sense of time at work: dilating, stretching, lurching, dragging, speeding by.

In teaming up with Chris Doyle, the Australian-born cinematographer who almost never uses a tripod and is known for his highly physical engagement with the action of the films he shoots, Wong has found the perfect co-conspirator for his adventures with pacing and rhythm. Doyle's fluid takes lend themselves equally to dynamic jump-cutting (*Chungking Express*) and moments of stasis (*Ashes of Time*); they also allow Wong all the leeway he needs for his improvisatory work with actors. And William Chang, Hong Kong's answer to the late Ferdinando Scarfiotti, completes the triangle with a design sense that's completely in tune with Wong's need for sets and locations which evoke the past, recent or distant, or which testify to the effects of time. Together, the three of them make one of the most charged creative teams in present-day film-making.

Wong Kar-Wai has been through three night-long shoots in succession on *Fallen Angel* when we finally sit down to talk in the coffee-shop of the hotel he's using as his temporary base. He's tired, and the interview is an obvious distraction from more urgent matters of script revision and further reshoots. But he's cheerful and forthcoming... and insists that he now feels more optimistic than he can ever remember being before. I only wish I could print some of the gossip we shared.

Tony Rayns: You studied graphic design at Hong Kong Polytechnic, but you entered the film industry as a scriptwriter. Which is more important to you, the writing or the 'look' of a film?

Wong Kar-Wai: My ideas about writing changed as soon as I started directing. As a writer, I wanted my scripts to be perfect and fully formed. As a

director, I know there are always factors beyond my control. Many things in any film cannot be planned concretely in advance. The best you can do is visualise what you want, and then respond to what's there once you go on set. Nowadays I start from a fairly loose script and tend to write the dialogue on the day of shooting. On *Chungking Express*, for example, I would sit in the coffee shop of the Holiday Inn on Nathan Road writing the lines and then go two blocks down the road to Chungking Mansions and give them to the actors just before we shot.

The 'look' of my films has been developed over the years with William Chang and the cinematographers. I've known William for many years; we're from very similar Shanghaiese families, and have a lot in common. We don't need to talk much; there's an instinctive mutual understanding. I first worked with Chris Doyle on *Days of Being Wild* and didn't really get on with him at first. It was later that we became friends. He doesn't have a strong technical background, but he's exceptionally good with light. That was actually a problem for him on *Ashes of Time*, because most of it had to be shot outdoors; he's much more experienced with indoor shooting in controlled-light conditions. I started making *Chungking Express* with Lau Wai-Keung as the cinematographer, but he had to leave to work on a project of his own and I ended up asking Chris to take over after running into him in Tokyo, where he was working on the post-production of Stanley Kwan's *Red Rose, White Rose*. He eventually reshot some parts of the film that I'd done before he joined the production, partly to unify the film's 'look' and partly because I'd rethought some sequences and wanted to redo them.

Days of Being Wild was a reaction against my first film *As Tears Go By*, which was full of harsh light and neon. I told Chris I wanted to do a 'monochrome' film, almost drained of colour. It's a film about different kinds of depression, and it needed to be very blank, very thin in texture. That created many problems for Chris: many filters, few lights, very hard to control focus. That's one reason it took so long to shoot.

Fallen Angel is tricky in a different way. We're shooting it almost entirely with wide-angle lens, with the actors very close to camera. We're again not using many lights, and there are constant problems, with face-shadows. The reason for using short focal length lenses is that you get a feeling of seeing the characters from a distance even though you're very close to them.

TR: Both *Ashes of Time* and *Chungking Express* use a lot of voice-overs. Is that because you want to extend your way of writing at the last minute into the editing process?

WKW: In a way, yes. But voice-overs are very important anyway. Nowadays people are more likely to talk to themselves than to others.

TR: Do you read a lot?

WKW: Yes. My father forced me to read the Chinese classics while I was in primary school. I was in Hong Kong by then, but my elder brother and sister were still in Shanghai and we stayed in touch by mail. In China, they had very limited access to good fiction – Balzac, Tolstoy, not much else. I wanted to keep up with them, and so I tried to read the same books. I found that once you were through the first 200 pages, Balzac is great! Later

I moved on to Raymond Chandler and John Steinbeck and some Japanese novelists. Nowadays I read mostly autobiographies: Maria Callas, Muhammad Ali, Tennessee Williams.

TR: Several people have noticed a connection between *Chungking Express* and the novels of Haruki Murakami, and I notice that many of the music cues on the soundtrack CD have been given titles drawn from Murakami's books.

WKW: I especially liked his early novel *Pinball '73* and his short story *A Girl, She is 100%*. Now that he's started worrying about the onset of middle age, I've kind of lost interest. But he and I are about the same age, and we had very similar formative experiences: we were both marked by what I call "Seventh Fleet culture" in those years between the Korean War and Vietnam. We both bought the music, the cigarettes, the lifestyle; seeing big foreigners on the streets made a ▶

The actress Michelle Reis, below, in Wong Kar-Wai's new and unfinished project 'Fallen Angel', which developed out of an idea initially considered for his soon-to-be released 'Chungking Express'



◀ strong impression on us. What I identified with in his books was the sense of being a certain age: of being not yet so far out of your twenties that you've forgotten them, but not yet feeling middle-aged.

TR: What was the origin of *Chungking Express*?

WKW: Once we finished shooting *Ashes of Time* we took a much-needed break and I found myself thinking that I should make a small film for myself. As a writer-director, I have many ideas for films that never get developed. You're sitting in a coffee-shop and an idea comes up, but there's no time to take it further. It might just be a gut feeling, it can easily evaporate. Anyhow, *Chungking Express* was based on two ideas that came to me like that. Originally there were three; the third is now the basis for *Fallen Angel*.

The first story changed a lot during filming. Brigitte Lin was supposed to be retiring from the screen after shooting *Chungking Express*, so we originally conceived her character as something like Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. She loved this: she was forever trying on wigs and acting to herself in the mirror. It was a very simple story: she responds to a newspaper advertisement for an actress, happens to meet the Takeshi Kaneshiro character and later stands him up. Eventually we kept the wig and the idea of a non-romance, but our model changed from *Streetcar* to John Casavettes' *Gloria*!

TR: Why are the men in both stories cops?

WKW: Partly because Hong Kong movies are supposed to be action-orientated; they're full of cops and gangsters, and I chose cops. Partly because I like the idea of uniforms and service numbers.

TR: Do you see the film's characters as having the same kind of symbolic dimension that the characters had in *Days of Being Wild*?

WKW: *Days of Being Wild* centres on various feelings about staying in or leaving Hong Kong. That's less of an issue now that we're so close to 1997. *Chungking Express* is more about the way people feel now. In *Days*, the characters are not happy with their solitude; it's the same with the characters in *Ashes of Time*. The people in *Chungking Express* know how to entertain themselves, even if it's just by talking to a bar of soap. They know how to live in a city.

TR: Did you seriously try to recreate the Hong Kong of the 1960s in *Days of Being Wild*?

WKW: I researched the period for nearly a year, right down to finding out what a steak cost in a restaurant at that time, but then realised I'd never be able to recreate old Hong Kong in such detail. The original idea was to set the first part of the film in 1963, the year I arrived in Hong Kong as a child. After doing the research, I moved it back to 1960. There was a sense that we were moving into a new page of history, with the election of Kennedy and so on. Hong Kong people were starting to become seriously ambitious. The whole world was waking up to something new. I set out to describe three contrasted types: the immigrant from Shanghai (the Leslie Cheung character), the Hong Kong native from Cheung Chau island (Andy Lau) and the rootless drifter (Tony Leung). [Leung plays the protagonist of the film's aborted second part, glimpsed only briefly at the end of the film as it stands - TR]

Since I didn't have the resources to recreate the period realistically, I decided to work entirely

from memory. And memory is actually about a sense of loss - always a very important element in drama. We remember things in terms of time: "Last night I met...", "Three years ago, I was...". But the game that Policeman #223 plays with the sell-by dates of cans of pineapple rings in *Chungking Express* is something different again. That's simply his way of making every minute of his life count for something.

TR: Is there a sense in which *Ashes of Time* is the missing second part of *Days of Being Wild*?

WKW: I'm still always trying to understand the character played by Andy Lau in *As Tears Go By*. He's a gangster, and I don't know what he thinks or what motivates him. The other characters are easy to understand: I know exactly what the cousin (Maggie Cheung) and the impulsive kid (Jacky Cheung) are thinking. But not him. My curiosity about this character carried over into the characters played by Leslie Cheung in *Days of Being Wild* and *Ashes of Time*. In that sense, *Ashes* does represent a continuation of *Days*. But *Days* was not a genre film, and *Ashes* is. Usually I find that genre conventions get in the way of dealing with certain areas of character psychology, but one of my inspirations for *Ashes* was *The Searchers* - a film which suggests how you can get inside an apparently opaque protagonist. In Ford's film, I've always been extremely touched by the relationship between the John Wayne character and his sister-in-law, which you see only in the way she passes him a cloth. It must amount to about three seconds of screen time, but the hint is enough.

TR: You used to write scripts for Patrick Tam, whose films are notoriously misogynistic - in fact you wrote *Final Victory*, which may be the most misogynistic he ever made. Are you generally more interested in male characters than female characters?

WKW: It makes no difference to me. In *Days of Being Wild*, the original concept was to start out focusing on men and gradually shift the focus to the women. Part two would have centred on the Maggie Cheung and Carina Lau characters, showing how they try to overcome the traumas caused by their failed love affairs. And I think that Maggie Cheung's character in *Ashes of Time* is the pivot around which the whole story turns. But it really makes no difference. Sometimes the setting is just as important as any of the human characters. I sometimes use an image without any actors in it at all, like the phone booth in *Days of Being Wild*. You can show change by showing things that don't change.

TR: So where are you going in *Fallen Angel*?

WKW: The spirit of the film will be a continuation of *Chungking Express*, but the story has been developed a lot since I decided to turn it into a feature in its own right. It's a story about the two sides of a coin. It begins with the literal flip of a coin, and then moves into two parallel stories with two sets of characters. But they intersect much more than those in *Chungking Express*.

TR: How does it relate to your feelings about nostalgia and regret?

WKW: It's all about ways to keep yourself happy. Grateful thanks to Shui Kei for much help in making this article possible. *'Chungking Express'* opens on 15 September at the ICA, the Hampstead Everyman and the Brixton Ritzy, and is reviewed on page 47 of this issue

WONG KAR-WAI ON 'CHUNGKING EXPRESS'

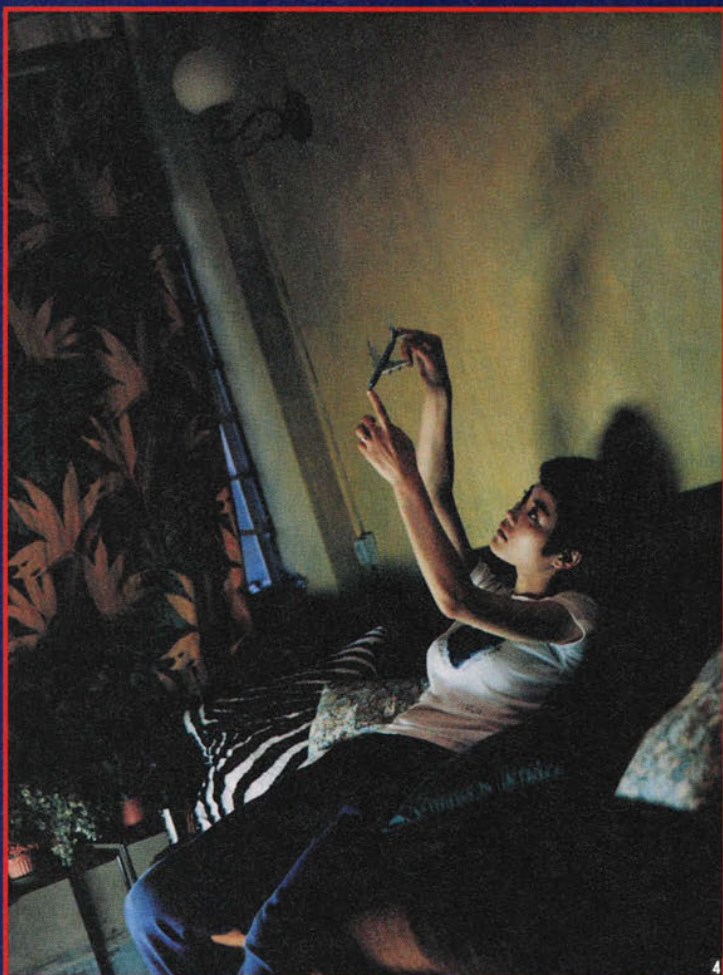
1. Brigitte Lin handing dollars to a group of Indians in a Chungking Mansions hostel. This is from the first story: Brigitte Lin (in raincoat, shades and blonde wig) is hiring these Indians to courier heroin out of Hong Kong. It was very funny shooting these scenes, because we never got the same Indian extras twice. The only guys who turned up regularly whenever we needed the extras were the one sitting next to Brigitte and the one above him on the upper bunk: they're from different Indian provinces and have some kind of love-hate relationship. I've used both of them again in *Fallen Angel*. I even thought of keeping the others' passports in order to get them to come back when they were needed, but it never worked.

I lived in the Tsimshatsui district when I was a kid, and befriended a very cosmopolitan group of people: westerners, White Russians and lots of Indians and Pakistanis. I remember that I was always much bigger physically than the Indians and so I was amazed the day when the boys suddenly had beards and the girls had breasts. My reasons for using Indian and Pakistani extras in *'Chungking Express'* and *'Fallen Angel'* have a lot

to do with those childhood memories.

2. Tony Leung and Valerie Chow in underwear with toy planes. This is a flashback to Cop #663 (Tony Leung) and his ex-girlfriend (Valerie Chow) in the heyday of their romance. I had to decide what the ex-girlfriend should do, and a number of different things came to mind which made her an air hostess. One thing was the miniature planes which I remembered from my childhood: we had to search long and hard to find some for the film. Another was the song 'What a Difference a Day Makes', sung by Dinah Washington, which I remembered being used in a PanAm commercial years ago. Once the girlfriend's job had been decided, we had to figure out which airline she should work for: it was decided only on the morning of the day we shot with her, when my line producer Jacky Pang called up a friend of hers who worked for United and borrowed a uniform. When Faye Wong reappears at the end of the film as an air hostess, she was supposed to be working for Cathay Pacific. But Faye looked awful in the Cathay uniform and so she became a United stewardess too.





3. Takeshi Kaneshiro using a public phone, with Faye Wong in the background.

This shot is from a sequence that's not in the final version of the film; we shot it at a fast-food stall which wouldn't let us back, and so we ended up doing all the fast-food counter scenes at Midnight Express. This scene was reshot there, with Kaneshiro in a different shirt and Faye not wearing shades. The scene marks the transition from the first story to the second; it's where Kaneshiro passes up the chance to date Faye.

Kaneshiro is from Taiwan, and I didn't realise that he was part-Japanese when I started working with him. He told me during the shoot that he could speak Japanese, and so I decided to use that. Actually, he seems so natural when he speaks Japanese it felt like shooting Japanese soap-opera in those scenes. Faye Wong was also a newcomer to film (she appeared in one other movie with the pop group Beyond), and she was very tense at first, especially in dialogue scenes. When I realised this, I kept her in the background for the first few days, and shot stuff between Tony Leung and the manager of the fast-food counter. I wasn't sure that she'd be able to hold the viewer's attention without dialogue, but her body language was great from the start. And after a few days she relaxed into the role; no problems at all.

4. Faye Wong holding toy plane in Tony Leung's apartment. This shows Faye Wong alone in Cop #663's apartment, and it was photographed for the poster, not for the film. We posed her and asked her to play around with the miniature plane. The

apartment we used actually belongs to Chris Doyle. We searched for ages for the right location, and Chris finally suggested taking a look at his place. I liked only two things about it: one was the curtain, which you can see in this shot, and the other was the fact that the Mid-Levels escalator passes right outside the window. Chris was very upset by what we did to the place during the shoot. We flooded it, did a lot of other damage, and completely screwed up his fax machine - which he desperately needs to communicate with all his many girlfriends. He was furious with us at the time. But just recently two Japanese photographers came to shoot the place, because of the film. And so it's become famous now!

5. Brigitte Lin in Chungking Mansions corridor with Indian extras. This is from early in the first story, where Brigitte Lin is recruiting potential drug couriers in Chungking Mansions. We actually used three locations for these scenes: one in Chungking Mansions itself, the other two in Mirador Mansions next door. I scouted around these buildings to find suitable locations, and I remember knocking at the door of one particularly shabby apartment. A very fat woman answered, whispering something that I couldn't understand and pointing to the apartment next door. Next door was a junkie who kept saying, "Don't shoot here." With the heat, the smells, the noise, the whole experience was hellish. That's what I wanted to capture.

We shot this at the very end of a long day when everyone was exhausted and

in a foul mood - with the exception of Brigitte, who kept her cool and helped coach the Indian extras. She was incredibly patient, and very professional. Similar situations arose during the shoot of 'Fallen Angel', but I had no one like Brigitte to rely on this time.

6. Faye Wong in toy shop with Polaroid camera; Brigitte Lin on sidewalk outside. This is Faye Wong's only appearance in the first story; she's buying a cuddly toy in the shop, and impulsively photographs Brigitte Lin who's waiting outside. I had the two women looking at each other, each thinking that the other might be her younger/older self; eventually they pose for a photo together. All of this was drastically shortened and simplified in the finished film, because we weren't able to shoot the follow-up scene for the end of the film: Brigitte was no longer available by then.

My original intention was that the two stories should intersect more than they do, and that the four main characters should all meet at least once somewhere in the film. One ending I wrote had all four of them in the transit lounge of Taipei Airport at the same time: Tony Leung was waiting for a connecting flight to California, Brigitte Lin was being arrested as a drug trafficker, Takeshi Kaneshiro was coming back to Taiwan to visit his family and Faye Wong was there as an air hostess. This was abandoned when I couldn't get permission to shoot in the location I wanted in the domestic air terminal. That place had the right feel and was the right size. They offered me the Chiang Kai-Shek International terminal instead, but I didn't like it.



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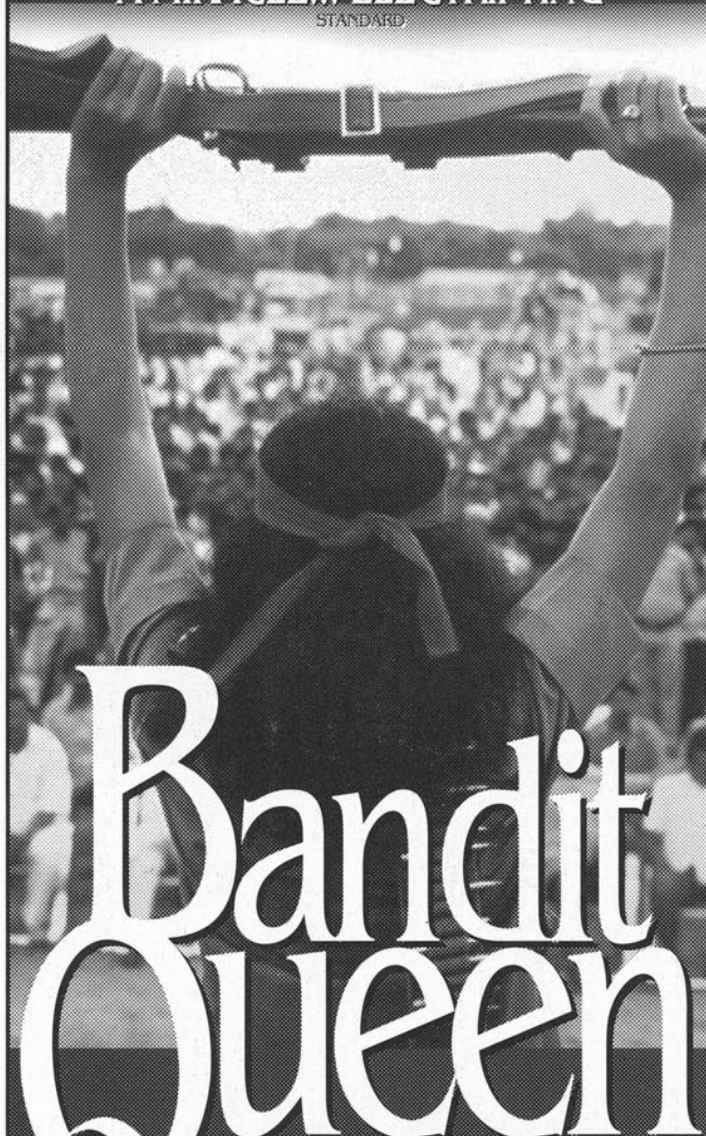
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EQUILIBRIUM

● "What I would like to do is to get to understand more about the method of film-making, not because it will give me greater control as an actress, but because I am curious to understand the whole assembly of it. It really fascinates me to know about the actual shooting process, to find out about all the pieces that you need to take into the editing suite and to see how you can manipulate them."

Everything about Saskia Reeves suggests a sparky thoroughness and enthusiasm for her craft that takes her beyond the job in question. The pay-off is nowhere more evident than in Michael Winterbottom's *Butterfly Kiss*, in which Reeves plays one of the most complex roles in her short career: Miriam, a dowdy and somewhat dim service-station assistant caught up in the messianic quest of a dangerous itinerant, Eunice (Amanda Plummer). It is a bleak road movie that takes them from a forlorn stretch of tarmac in Northern England to the ragged edge of the world. While ostensibly the film seems to belong to Plummer, whose performance is like some pyrotechnic display, Reeves' crumpled Miriam creeps up on you, unfurling to fill the screen. Perhaps it is Reeves' desire to understand the construction of cinema (she has worked as a camera assistant) that allows her to give such a seamless performance. Her playing has an awkward intensity that makes one curious – yet, though the audience is drawn to her, it's not at the expense of the other actors or of the composition of the scene.

She chose to study drama – following her father, the actor Peter Reeves – as an alternative to a 'regular' education, going to the Guildhall School of Drama rather than retaking her A-levels. In many ways she is typical of a particular breed of English actor who has honed their skills in theatre (where she has performed with the likes of Mike Leigh, Cheek By Jowl and the RSC), film and 'upmarket' television, deftly manoeuvring between them all. Over the last eight or so years she has amassed a large body of work, although it makes for a disjointed portfolio which is hard to assess.

Her versatility is particularly evident in her screen work. Making her screen debut in 1990 in Thaddeus O'Sullivan's stark drama *December Bride*, which was set in turn-of-the-century Ireland, she was Sarah, a young woman who defies convention by refusing to name the father of her child. Tight-lipped and bound in on herself, Reeves played the truculent heroine as a



Delicate balance: Saskia Reeves and Amanda Plummer in *'Butterfly Kiss'*

woman who suffers in her silence but one who has learnt to be as hard as the land she works. In the same year she also proved herself an adept comedienne, as a swanky career girl, not as sorted out as she seems, in Beeban Kidron's *Antonia and Jane*, a sly comedy about two combative friends made for the BBC (subsequently distributed theatrically by Miramax in the US). She seemed to relish the possibilities of this brittle character, a woman who has to keep her head high through a variety of humiliating incidents, including an unsatisfying sexual encounter with a strange man and a jar of Frank Cooper's marmalade.

On screen, her potential for comedy has yet to be explored further, although she appeared as a tart-tongued barmaid in Phil Davies' *i.d.* (1994), in itself a change from her more austere roles. More often, directors seem to turn to her

for her ability to root through the more uncomfortable emotions. In *Children Crossing* (1990), a BBC Screen Two directed by Angela Pope, Reeves' taut performance sustained what turned out to be an uneven piece about a schizophrenic marriage. In it she plays a woman who decides to walk out on her philandering husband, only to have to cope with the accidental death of her two daughters. Reeves brought a credibility to the plot's sudden turns.

Such a grief well observed was also the substance of her monologue for the *In My Defence* series for the BBC. Based on the real case history of Philippa Monaghan, put on trial for the mercy killing of a mother suffering from motor neuron disease, Reeves' episode, *I Will Show You Mercy*, could as easily have been an emotionally voyeuristic documentary interview. But Reeves lets slip the terrible distress of the woman as

Saskia Reeves' performance in the new film 'Butterfly Kiss' is startling and compelling. How does she view acting? She talks about it with Lizzie Francke

she slowly loses her chatty, chain-smoking composure while recounting the events in question.

This was a showcase for her ability to earth such chaotic feelings, and she is not the kind of actress to set a piece off-kilter. The delicate balance established between Plummer and Reeves in *Butterfly Kiss* reminds one of the equilibrium found between Clive Owen and Reeves as the sister and brother in *Close My Eyes*, Stephen Poliakoff's claustrophobic tale of incest set against the conspicuous consumption of the 1980s. She compares the approaches to the two films. "Clive and I were able to become very familiar with each other. Whereas Amanda and I didn't rehearse much together. She is one of the most experienced actresses that I have worked with on film. It allowed me to work in a certain way. Michael would allow us to mess around with a scene and to pull the script about, though ultimately bouncing back to it, so it sounded as if it was improvised."

She considers the preparation process for a film to be as much as anything about assessing how to collaborate with others: the choreography of it. "It is to do with the fine tuning between the director, the other actors and the camera, judging how much you show – and how much you can get away with, depending on where the camera is."

When it comes to the specific details of a role, she likes to find balance there also. "You can research yourself into oblivion, then it comes stalking out on set or stage. Ultimately it should always come from the script. If there is anything in the script that I need a little more information about, then I'll go and find it." For Reeves it seems important to get the exteriors just so. For *The Bridge* (1990), a Victorian period melodrama about a married woman's passion for the artist Philip Wilson Steer, she concentrated on her character's corset-bound movements, examining old photographs to observe the way that the women sat or held their hands. Yet she was as much bound by a script that sadly failed to strike an emotional chord. "It wasn't such a strong text," she admits.

Conversely *Butterfly Kiss* is the kind of thing that "comes round every four years if you're lucky." For Reeves, Frank Cottrell Boyce's script had already done the work, although she still needed to build up the character's carapace. "You need to observe people. For instance with the clothes, the costume designer and I decided to couple research with shopping. We went up

SASKIA REEVES ON CHARACTER ACTING

"The performances that have made the most impression on me, that have the deepest affect – when I narrowed it down to three out of the many – I realised are all those of character actresses. Judy Holliday in *Born Yesterday*, Giulietta Masina in *La Strada* and Maggie Smith in *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*. In each what inspires me is their skill coupled with a presence, and by that I don't mean beauty, though there is something beautiful about them. In particular I thought about Smith playing an alcoholic in *The Lonely Passion*. It's her face: she manages to convey so much in her fragile face, she physicalises it so that it is so graceful. It is the same watching Masina. They are very economical and specific about the choice of movements that they make. I think of the scene in *The Lonely Passion* where Smith has just moved into a boarding house, she goes into her room, it's a horrible room and she turns around. It's very Maggie Smith, but so right for the character, as she just puts her hand on the mantelpiece and it's almost like she is looking around saying, 'Oh my god. But I'm going to be fine, it's a new start.' But we don't see her face, it's all in her body, the way her arm is holding her up and keeping her there as she surveys this nasty boarding-house room. Moments like that followed by the camera are beautiful – it's like an arc. When you are cutting a film, you need to have that whole sweep, you have to see her coming into the room and that gesture has to come at the right moment or too much film is used and you can't cut it in afterwards because you need the whole movement of her entering the room. Then it's the way that she holds her mouth sometimes, or the expression in her eyes. She is a lonely, lonely woman with a drinking problem and Smith manages to say all these things about this woman and it keeps twisting and twisting me in the gut because it is so exquisitely placed. It's like her fingers – she has very graceful bones in her hands and you know that this woman doesn't eat that much. The whole character of Judith Hearne is articulated in that physicality. It's the same with Judy Holliday in *Born Yesterday* – she seems so crazy and stupid, but examine the way she moves – it's so deft, what she does with her hands and body. It's like delicate thin line drawing, so strong, so immovable and so absolutely clearly defined. Like the best artists, it allows them to be moving without being sentimental. Though Smith and Holliday's characters are victims, they don't play them as victims – they have a pride. Maybe it comes from within the actress, I don't know. But there is never a sense of underdog. You care about them, but without them ever asking you to do so."

to Preston and sat on a wall people-watching. The shoes that I wear – most people living in that area will know where I got them. Such details give the character her specificity, ensure that she is much more than an accent. It's then you can start working on the mythical edge, examining the dynamics between Eunice and Miriam. The film is about friendship and love, the way people relate to each other when it's obsessive, addictive, dysfunctional. Shakespeare wrote about it in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – that line 'I'll be your dog.' It's not dissimilar to the way Miriam deals with Eunice."

Working for both stage and screen is a necessity for many actors in this country, but Reeves embraces it. After a long stint working for the screen – she has just finished *The Cruel Train* for BBC2, a reworking of *La Bête humaine* set in a seedy Second-World-War-torn Britain – she now wants to do more theatre. While she agrees that

the problem of suitable film roles for women is an endless debate, she believes the stage can sustain one through the drought.

Nevertheless, cinema holds a great fascination for her, and she has an extensive viewing repertoire that she can make the most incisive comments on, her fresh approach making a dignified contrast to the cagey responses of many in her profession. That freshness also extends to the work that she is in. "With *Butterfly Kiss*, I was enthralled with what Michael and the cinematographer Seamus McGarvey could do. There were moments when he would shoot something, I would see it on the screen and go, 'Wow!' There is that emotional effect that comes into play which enhances everything. It's something that you don't experience when it's just you and the camera doing it – it's that leap which I want to understand."

'Butterfly Kiss' opened on 18 August

● Writing about *Performance* sent me back to *The Romantic Agony*, Mario Praz's classic 1933 book on the nineteenth-century Decadent Movement and its background. The chapter headings say it all: 'The Beauty of the Medusa', 'The Metamorphoses of Satan', 'The Shadow of the Divine Marquis', 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci', 'Byzantium' – and the final appendix on 'Le Vice Anglais'. Killed off for decades in Britain by the Oscar Wilde trial and the suppression of *The Yellow Book*, the Romantic Agony was re-activated in the 60s with a vengeance. *Performance* was its new apotheosis, its new *Schéhérazade*, with Mick Jagger as its Nijinsky (indeed Jagger, something of a balletomane himself, was "obsessed with Rudolph Nureyev in the mid-60s" and "saw a lot of him", according to Marianne Faithfull in her book *Faithfull*). *Performance* brought together Castañeda, Aleister Crowley, Escher, tantra, "moss-encrusted caves of goblins and elves" – caves in which Jagger, as the doomed King Goblin, pirouetted and pranced with his neon wand through a bewitched court, waiting for the juggler in the basement to finish him off; brought together many of the elements, in other words, of what Faithfull dubs "the hippie canon". Another way to see it: the reclusive rock star's weird abode – complete with Mars bars and mushrooms on the doorstep with the milk – was (as Michèle Breton's Lucy explains to the immigration authorities) truly "a place of learning", where Turner (Jagger) regaled his acolytes with "magic stories". "What a freak-show," says Chas (James Fox), the exterminator. "A right piss-hole!" A bullet in the head to follow.

"It preserves a whole era under glass," notes Faithfull: "An allegory of libertine Chelsea life in the late 60s, with its baronial rock stars, wayward *jeunesse dorée*, drugs, sex and decadence." Appropriately, the best book on this sub-culture is a book about clothes, Nik Cohn's *Today there are no Gentlemen*, which vividly evokes the evolution of the Chelsea Set, its imbrication with the pop music elite and its metamorphosis into flower power and psychedelia: Chelsea as first stop on the road to Persia. It all begins in the mid-50s – Mark Sykes, Suna Portman, Christopher Gibbs, the Markham Arms, the Fantasy. Sykes and Portman disappeared, Sykes to Australia, Portman to Morocco. The one with stamina was Gibbs, eventually to be the designer of *Performance*. Expelled from Eton at the same time as Sykes, he went first to Paris, then back to London in 1956. "He was very flash," writes Cohn. "Sometimes he just wore tight jeans or fancy dress, like the others; but mostly his tastes were more elaborate: suits with double-breasted waistcoats and cloth-covered buttons, and velvet ties, and striped Turkish shirts with stiff white collars, and cravats. Above all, he had a passion for carnations and was forever buying new strains, pink-and-yellow, or green-ink, or purple with red flecks. 'I must have thought I was an aesthete,' he says. 'A gentleman aesthete. But I was a bit grubby as well; a dandy with bitten fingernails.'"

It was Gibbs who spawned the new Chelsea, the Chelsea of 1959, the pivotal year. He opened an antique shop, buying and selling old clothes, as Nik Cohn recounts: "Following Suna Portman's example, Christopher Gibbs had gone to



Morocco and brought back Arabic robes and slippers, and quantities of hashish. He sat at home, propped up on his Marrakech cushions and surrounded by his friends, and this was among the first English attempts at what later became the Hippie lifestyle." Gibbs' new clan comprised the Ormsby Gores, Michael Rainey, Mark Palmer, Tara Browne, David Mlinaric. In due course, this clan of aristocratic dandies ("Dandyism," said Baudelaire, its first great theorist, "is the last splendour of heroism in decadence") met the new pop elite, the Beatles, the Stones. In public, this meant the Ad Lib; later, in the mid-60s and in private, it meant One Courtfield Road, by Gloucester Road tube,

where Brian Jones lived with Anita Pallenberg. Again the Moroccan rug, the exotic hangings, the lamps draped with scarves, the satins and hookahs, Dandyism, Decadence. This is where a segment of the Stones and their entourage fused with a segment of Chelsea – Gibbs, dandy and decorator, Rainey, clothes designer, Michael Cooper, photographer, Robert Fraser, art gallery owner, and Donald Cammell, prime creator of *Performance*. Faithfull fell under the spell. In her book she remembers Gibbs in particular: "a Wildean aesthete come to life, plucked straight from the opening lines of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: 'From the corner of the divan of Persian saddle-bags on which he was



The Dandy in his Garden of Delights: Mick Jagger plays Turner, the jaded rock star whose decadent world is invaded

POSSESSION

25 years on, Peter Wollen examines dandyism, decadence and death in 'Performance'

lying, Lord Henry elevated his eyebrows, and looked at him in amazement through the thin blue wreaths of smoke that curled up in such fanciful whorls from his heavy opium-tainted cigarette." The stage was set for *Performance*. Before which, however, Jones had to exit the scene, his place to be possessed by Jagger.

The road to death

First, however, a word on dandyism, one of the keys to *Performance*. Dandyism, argued Baudelaire, himself the moving spirit of Decadence, was "a kind of religion. The most rigorous monastic rule, the inexorable commands of the Old Man of the Mountain, who enjoined suicide

on his intoxicated disciples, were not more despotic or more slavishly obeyed than this doctrine of elegance and originality, which like the others, imposes upon its ambitious and humble sectaries, men as often as not full of spirit, passion, courage, controlled energy, the terrible precept: *Perinde ac cadaver!*" Be like a corpse! Dandyism is the road to death through narcissistic self-sacrifice. In *Performance* the dandies are artists headed towards destruction, and, in Baudelaire's words, creators of "a new kind of aristocracy", which displays "the last flicker of heroism in a decadent age", to become "its high priests and its victims at one and the same time". But the reference to the Old Man of the

Mountain takes us even closer to the heart of *Performance*, to the common root of killer and hippie, assassin and *hashishin*. From his mountain fastness at Alamut in Persia, Hassan-i-Sabbah rewarded his assassins by drugging them with hashish and admitting them to his Garden of Delights, full of rare flowers, strange perfumes and beautiful young women. For 35 years he never left his apartments (except twice to walk on the roof). Legend says that the Old Man's last words were, "Nothing is true. Everything is permitted!"

Hassan-i-Sabbah is cited prominently in *Performance*. His story is recounted by Turner to Chas and the message left behind after Chas ►



The intruder: James Fox

◀ has killed Turner reads "GONE TO PERSIA". Finally, as Chas is driven off in the Roller to what we must assume is to be his own execution, the English countryside gives way, in the final image of the film, to the mountains of Alamut. The whole film can be seen as an allegory of the encounter of the reclusive Old Man in his Garden of Delights with the dedicated assassin, and their joint death trip together under the sign of "Nothing is true. Everything is permitted!". Hassan-i-Sabbah came to Cammell, who originated and wrote the film, as well as co-directing it, by way of William Burroughs. Burroughs read of him in Betty Boutoul's *Le Vieux De La Montagne* ("The Book", in Burroughs' phrase), and he appeared in his first cut-up work, *The Exterminator*. The cut-up technique also contributed to the making of *Performance*. Nicolas Roeg, its other co-director (and cinematographer), was intrigued by *The Cut-Ups*, a film made jointly by Burroughs and Anthony Balch, which was shown at the Cinephone in 1966. Roeg went to Duke Street, where Burroughs then lived, to consult Balch about the arbitrary editing techniques they had used.

According to Faithfull, Pallenberg was "obsessed with Burroughs", who had moved to London in 1960 and lived for a time in the dreary Empress Hotel in Earl's Court, happily within walking distance of Courtfield Road, where he was often to be seen. He also spent a lot of time in Tangiers, where he was living when Mick and Brian and Keith and Marianne and Anita and Gibbs and Deborah Dixon (a costume consultant for *Performance*) and Michael Cooper and Robert Fraser (with his Moroccan servant) all set out for Morocco in March 1967. (Jones never made it, having been hospitalised on the way.) Morocco was a crucial element in the formation of the Stones, both visually as

well as musically. Jones in Courtfield Road and then Jagger in Chester Square had followed Gibbs' lead in decorating their homes Moroccan-style, and Gibbs replicated this style once again in *Performance*. Morocco had long provided a mesmerising image of the Orient and its fabled Garden of Delights, more directly familiar than Persia and in a sense standing in for it. At Courtfield Road, the drug of choice was hashish. It was not until 1966 that LSD invaded London and acid became dominant on the scene. As a drug text, *Performance* is a palimpsest of Morocco and hashish, Castañeda and Magic Mushrooms, Richard's country home Redlands and LSD, with a tell-tale syringe in Pallenberg's arse making its ominous debut appearance.

Jones, the first Stone onto the gilded drug scene, was also its first victim, the one whose death-drive got the better of him. In *Performance* the assassin carries out on Turner the death sentence which Cammell must already have seen was hanging over Jones, and it is Jones that Jagger impersonates in the film. Jones was the model for what Faithfull calls "the archetypal 60s rock apocalypse character", who lacked Jagger's stamina and distance and foundered rapidly under the impact of drugs and shifting allegiances within the band. Indeed, by the time *Performance* was made, Jones, like Turner, was already a figure of the past, whereas Jagger, who played the role, would still be around to look funny when he was 50. Jagger had emerged as a star because of his stage-presence and his role as song-writer with Richard, but also because he took most aptly to the new social role played by the music élite. Already, it was Christmas shopping at Harrod's and a late lunch at Lorenzo's. Then, early in 1967, there was the drug bust at Redlands, where the party included the two Old Etonians Gibbs and Fraser (plus Moroccan servant), all assembled to sample designer LSD brought by the American 'Acid King', David Schneiderman. Suitably stoned, they set off to visit Edward James' surrealist folly at West Dean, but ended up looning around on the beach. Back home, around eight o'clock, they were raided by the West Sussex police. Jagger, Richard and Fraser were busted, tried, sent to jail and finally released.

Redlands was in effect a show bust, designed to stamp out the emergent counterculture. The Stones got away with it because the Establishment split ranks ("Who Breaks A Butterfly On A Wheel?" asked William Rees-Mogg's editorial in *The Times*) and decided, at a higher level, that discretion was the better part of valour. Lord Chief Justice Parker dismissed all charges on appeal. It was Redlands, however, that made *Performance* possible. In the first place, it established Jagger and Richard as national figures, representatives of their generation. In the second place, it crystallised their image as outlaws. The music which followed Redlands – *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, *Beggars Banquet*, *Let It Bleed* – consolidated this artistically. At the same time, the realisation that the bust had a political aspect, that a battle-line had been drawn between two cultural regimes, aligned the Stones with the political upheavals of the following year – 1968, the year *Performance* was made, and the year of the Grosvenor Square demonstration. Jagger

was at Grosvenor Square and subsequently sent the handwritten text of 'Streetfighting Man' to Tariq Ali's *The Black Dwarf* for publication. Violence (a chain-reaction, of course, from American violence in Vietnam) sat uneasily with flower power and psychedelia. "There was nothing about flower power in 'Jumpin' Jack Flash', was there?", Jagger later remarked to Richard. In *Performance* the two strands were intertwined.

Flowers and violence

Cohn notes how, as early as the 50s, the Chelsea *beau monde* was already mingling with the criminal world. In the 60s the two worlds grew even closer together. Ronnie Kray could be seen at such clubs as the Ad Lib and the Scotch of St James and was photographed with his twin by David Bailey for Bailey's photo-records of the fashionable world at that time. The Blind Beggar shooting, on 8 March, 1966, brought the Krays to national prominence. The Robert Fraser circle had its own informant in the world of the Krays – gay aristo David Litvinoff, who served as 'Director of Authenticity' or (more formally) 'Dialogue Coach' on *Performance*. Part of Litvinoff's job was, in Faithfull's words, "to be James Fox's tutor in infamy, immersing James in the netherworld of London". Fox was taken down to Brixton and the Old Kent Road and (according to 'Spanish Tony', the Stones' own netherworld connection) sent on house-breaking missions, as part of this "immersion". Fox himself spotted Johnny Shannon during these expeditions, a boxing trainer at the Thomas A Beckett, who plays the Ronnie Kray-esque gay gang boss, Harry Flowers.

As Jagger put it, "He hung out all the time with all kinds of fucking rough people. Very rough people indeed." Cammell observed that "The essence of a 'total' performance is that the



Tell-tale syringe: Anita Pallenberg

playing of a role becomes a transference of identity – a kind of ‘possession’.

There is a deeper sense in which the entire film of *Performance* is about possession. Chas/Fox is possessed by Turner/Jagger and thus recognises Turner’s own desire for death. *Performance* is a make-over movie with a surprising sting in the tail. A gangster movie is gradually absorbed by a hippie pastoral, but there remains an irreducible core of violence, which psychedelia and music and sex cannot ever overcome – with which, indeed, they are covertly complicit. As Roeg put it, “Turner is like a man who meets a mirror of himself.” Turner makes Chas over (just as Pallenberg used to make Jones over to look like Francoise Hardy – or herself) but he is also deeply attracted by the low-life violence he senses in Chas and hence in himself. Chas surrounds himself with an armour of masculinity to deny his own femaleness. Turner surrounds himself with a cocoon of femininity to deny his maleness, his violence. When the film was released, Jagger commented that he could not really follow Cammell’s thoughts about the relationship between music and violence. “Donald’s always trying to explain it to me and I just blindly carry on.” From Jagger’s own account, however, it seems that Cammell saw rock music as a ritualisation of violence, which, like tournaments in feudal times, acted as a safety valve, permitting its free expression in theatricalised form. As Cammell himself observed, “The film was made two-and-a-half years ago. Now we’ve had Altamont. It’s so obvious that Turner has been through an Altamont type of disaster that we’d probably have used it now.” Altamont, in this reading, was a breakdown of ritualisation, of the kind anticipated in *Performance*, a resurgence of violence from within psychedelia.

The roots of the film plainly go back to Losey’s masterpiece *The Servant*, made five years earlier, in 1963. This time, however, the story is reversed. It is Fox who intrudes into the house and is possessed by its owner, rather than the owner who is possessed by the intruder. Following Losey’s example, *Performance* is the British film which comes closest to a modernist art film in the New Wave mould. Its direct predecessors were *The Servant*, *Repulsion* and *Blowup*, all London films made by foreigners – Losey, Polanski, Antonioni – but set in Chelsea or South Kensington. *Performance* moves decisively north of the park, to Powis Square, just off Portobello Road, then seen as a crumbling crime-ridden ghetto. It anticipated Jarman’s *Jubilee* and such later Notting Hill films as *Crystal Gazing* (which I made with Laura Mulvey) or Hanif Kureishi’s *London Kills Me*. Unexpected elements of *Performance* can also be detected in Greenaway’s *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife And Her Lover*: the ceremonial torture of a gang victim on the front bumper of a luxury car, the androgynous child, the fatal encounter of gangster and effete book-reader. In a wider context, *Performance* can be seen in relation to Godard – Pierrot *Le Fou* with “ketchup all over the screen”, *La Chinoise* and of course *One Plus One* – as well as to Bertolucci’s *Partner*, Antonioni’s *Zabriskie Point*, Pasolini’s *Teorema*, Kubrick’s *Clockwork Orange*, Makaveyev’s *W.R.–Misterije Organizme* (*W.R.–Mysteries of the Organism*), Hopper’s *Easy Rider*, even Anderson’s

If.... This cluster of films makes up what we might call the ‘68 canon, the extraordinary output of a few brief years when the cinema, as Cammell remarked of Jagger, “took art out to the edge where it begins to have weird effects.”

However, the most revealing comparison which might be made is the one between *Performance* and the “anti-cinema” of Kenneth Anger. Anger was obsessed with Jagger. He had known the Stones since the Courtfield Road days and was fascinated with what he interpreted as their satanic power. He was especially influential on Pallenberg, who became interested in witchcraft and the Crowleyan magick which Anger preached. Crowley’s motto, “Do What Thou Wilt”, plainly paralleled Hassan-i-Sabbah’s “Nothing is true. Everything is permitted!”. Anger’s films have the same mix of fascination with sexuality, violence and occult lore which marks *Performance*. The homosexual motorcycle gang in *Scorpio Rising* (1963) precedes the Jack the Lad gang in *Performance* – and Anger’s project during his London years, which coincided with the making of *Performance*, involved persuading Jagger to create the synthesised soundtrack for Anger’s 1969 film *Invocation of My Demon Brother*. Indeed, the motif of the Demon Brother itself evokes *Performance*. In Anger’s words, the Demon Brother is “the *eidolon*, or the

did the film’s extraordinary soundtrack, was another old Stones associate, introduced to them to do the arrangements on their first album because of Andrew Loog Oldham’s obsession with Phil Spector, for whom Nitzsche had arranged ‘He’s A Rebel’, ‘River Deep, Mountain High’ and the various Ronettes songs. Roeg was another on the edge of the Stones scene – the only one apart from Fox with a serious film-making background. Roeg, according to Jagger, “was the professional doing his thing.” Together with Fox, he played a crucial role holding the project together, but the crazed, fantastic world of the film came primarily from Cammell’s perverse imagination. It depended on casting so many people he knew both with and against the grain, forcing them further than they wanted to go, drawing on his acute perception of their public strengths and private weaknesses. It was Cammell who wanted to draw on the image of the Stones as an “enemy to straight people”, an enemy to the whole Establishment, especially to judges and lawyers and corporate power. “The movie makes it real. It upsets them. They’re scared.”

The concept of film-making as a magical art places *Performance* squarely within the Decadent as well as the modern tradition. In fact the two are linked. The cinematic influences of Losey or

It was the Redlands drug bust that made ‘Performance’ possible. In the first place, it established Jagger and Richard as national figures, representatives of their generation. In the second place, it crystallised their image as outlaws

secret double who is possibly a demon and possibly an angel. It’s either your better self or your worse self, or the part of you that’s needed to become complete.” Bobby Beausoleil, the Demon Brother in Anger’s film, proved to be demonic – he went to jail for life for murder. Anger saw his own inspiration as coming from Rimbaud or Lautréamont, whose example could restore faith “in a ‘pure cinema’ of sensual revelation... We will give back to the dream the first state of its veneration. We will recall primitive mysteries... Hidden away are the followers of a faith in ‘pure cinema’, even in this unlikely age.” *Performance*, I believe, shares this same romantic agony and aspiration.

Kindred spirits

Like Anger’s films, *Performance* also has the feel of a home movie, albeit a home movie produced by Warner Brothers. All the major participants knew each other. Cammell had lived with Deborah Dixon but also, in separate threesomes, with both Breton and Pallenberg. Gibbs was a central figure in the Stones-Fraser milieu; Fox and his partner Andee Cohen had been close to Jagger and Faithfull since they met at Dirk Bogarde’s 1967 Christmas Party at the Connaught Hotel. Cohen was an “an unrepentant Bohemian” who believed in past lives, according to Faithfull, and the two couples were “kindred spirits”. The legendary Jack Nitzsche, who

Godard or Anger run in parallel with the literary influences of Nabokov or Burroughs or Borges (whose image appears in the film at the moment of Turner’s death). Modernist fascination with interiority, shifting structures of time, reversibility of dream and reality, stories of doubles and cognitive illusions (all so evident in Roeg’s later career) easily bleeds into a fascination with extreme mental states, sexual transgression, drugs, occultism and possession, perhaps more suggestive of Cammell’s later work – the highly disconcerting *Demon Seed* (1977) and *White of the Eye* (1986). When I first saw *Performance* in 1970, I lived only a stone’s throw from 81 Powis Square. It was already ten years after my own trip to Persia, ten years after sharing a flat with the future founders of Indica, *International Times* and UFO. I knew that *Performance*’s release had been delayed because a “nervous” Warner Brothers, as the phrase goes, “didn’t know what to do with it,” that it was already a *film maudit*. I knew the cultural milieu from which it emerged and so saw it as a film with its own precise co-ordinates in space, time and life. It was our film – London, ‘68, the counterculture. At the time, I saw it as the beginning of something. Now I see it more as the end, the last splendour of heroism in Decadence, a strange vision of England as its own fantastic double, which might have turned out either angel or demon, but never got the chance.

TUNING INTO WONDERS

Christopher Gibbs gave 'Performance' its look. He talks to Jon Savage about the High 60s

● To summon up London in the High 60s, all you need to do is watch *Blowup* and *Performance*: faithfully fantastic records of an era both. The set designs for these two films – the riverside location of the climactic party sequence in which David Hemmings loses his soul, the shape-shifting Turner House in which James Fox finds his – are perfect interiorisations of 1966-68: exquisite, hermetic, brilliantly eclectic, they freeze time into the everlasting present that is not only the hallmark of psychedelic drugs, but of the youthful principle itself. Here, there is no yesterday, no tomorrow: the images burn into the brain.

Performance in particular is a dizzying, warping fusion of fiction and reality. Just as its sets reflect the London milieu of the main participants, the demands of its script spilled over into the real lives of the main characters: Jagger performing a sex scene with Keith Richard's girlfriend Anita Pallenberg; James Fox becoming so disturbed by his transformation that he gave up acting for a decade. Some of Chas' firm were real criminals, John Bindon for one; some of the Turner House denizens were real druggies, among them Pallenberg and Michèle Breton, who died of an overdose a few years later. It is this existential authority – the disturbance is for real – that gives the film its continued power, a power still celebrated by the scores of people who make the pilgrimage to the Turner House exterior at 81 Powis Square.

There are at least six set-ups within the Turner House, three seen in mere glimpses: the long hallway, shot from up the stairs; an empty room where two hierophants attempt to sell Turner a Magritte; and the panelled, psychedelic country kitchen, with its pestle and mortar, copper spoons and Wedgwood china in neat racks. The principal sets all have the same delirious, arcane mix of Pop, ethnic and country styles: in the large dressing/bathroom where the mushroom ritual takes place, a rocking horse, such as you might find in a country house attic, rests next to Moroccan tiles, cushions, bedspreads. The walls are rust: like African mud or dried blood. Chas' basement room, heralded by hunting trophies on the staircase, is much grungier, queerier – with its green walls, purple lighting and op-collaged images of the Beatles, Dean and Dylan – but, as always in this film, there is also the element of

class: a double bed with wooden frame and carved, antique headboard.

Indeed, much of the attraction of this period lies in its class mix: that extraordinary cross-pollination of criminals, upwardly mobile street urchins, disaffected middleclass artists, and bohemian aristocrats ever on the lookout for sensation. Britain is a country where this mix is actively discouraged: since the 70s the class walls have gone up again, explicitly re-erected by New Right ideologues and politicians. If *Blowup* and *Performance* seem to embody this High 60s fusion, it's because of the people involved. A set designer on both films (though *Blowup* only informally), and one of the first to make the link between intellectual and gangster, pop star and Guinness heir, Christopher Gibbs is well placed to remember this brief moment – not least because, after *Performance*, he left this world to return to the business which he still practises in Vigo Street: antiques and interior design.

"I lived on Cheyne Walk opposite the houseboats," Gibbs now says, "in a beautiful apartment on the first floor, which belonged to the National Trust. It had great big panelled rooms, which I rented for this modest sum. There's this bend in the river, so you get a mile of water, and you get

these amazing light effects over what they call Turner's Reach. I was staying up all night taking acid, and entertaining expansively, having 25 people I'd never seen before. There were piles of Moroccan things, ancient Persian carpets, tapestries on the wall, and more or less no furniture. It was very beautiful, like hippies in Venice in the seventeenth century: great dishes of fruit and incense burning, very glamorous heterosexual boys hanging around waiting to be goosed. Then I had my own gang of friends who they liked too: some of whom could be described as aristocratic, some of them were just straight bohemian, some were just loons, but generally relaxed people.

"I had a part in making the party scene look the way that it did, and a lot of the people who came were my friends. If I looked at it I could probably point out 20 of them, and half of them might still be alive. There were a certain amount of casualties in this period: even if they didn't go then, they went in the next ten years. It's only the toughies that came through: junk has taken a lot, and Aids has taken a lot more.

"Just up the road from this apartment lived my friend Jagger. It's difficult getting the chronologies right, but I think he and I met up through Robert Fraser, who I'd been at Eton with.



Fusing fiction and reality: Anita Pallenberg and Mick Jagger in 'Performance'

I was kicked out at 15, and he was kicked out at 18. We remained friends but it was a rather demanding friendship, because he wasn't a person who subscribed to the ordinary rules of human conduct. Earlier, I'd hung out with Larry Parnes and a lot of rough boys in the Gloucester Road, but it was through Robert that I made friends with the Stones – we both used to go to the same Soho eatery, and then they used to come down to Robert's place in Mount Street, stay up late, smoke joints, drop acid and listen to music.

"When they got the idea that they might like to live in the country, Robert was a proper townie and thought I was a country boy: 'Yes. Ask Gibbs, he'll tell you...' So I used to get off on these jaunts with Mick and Marianne, looking at these charming houses for sale. I went on holidays with Brian and Anita to Tangier a couple of times, and with Mick and Marianne and Keith and Anita to Marrakech. And to Ireland a lot. We used to go on romantic adventures which might start at two o'clock in the morning and wind up in some windswept hill fort, high on acid at five in the morning. Generally tuning into wonders of one kind or another.

"It was very nice for me, because they were a bit younger, and tuned me into all sorts of things that I didn't know about, so it was a fair exchange of energies and aspirations. They were very tolerant and accepting of one's sexuality: they were completely cool about that, unlike many of my contemporaries. The Stones were much more sophisticated than Larry Parnes and his boys: much more subtle and enjoyable and on one's wavelength. They didn't have that much money then: I think they were kept on a very tight rein by Andrew Loog Oldham and Allen Klein, who were pretty sleazy. So when the Stones started thinking of other ways of broadening their careers and making some money, the question of movies came up.

"I was asked to work on *Performance* by Donald Cammell as much as anyone. I created the house, Turner's house. There were two interiors: the rough stuff was done in a *cul-de-sac* off Kensington Gore: I think Winston Churchill used to live there. Most of it took place in a house in Lowndes Square, on the east side, which used to belong to an old rascal called Leonard Plugg, a former Tory MP. Plugg was incredible: he was the first person I ever heard of who had a car telephone – this was in 1955. There was an art director, who was a real pro, who was really nice about somebody coming in who didn't know about anything except what he wanted it to look like, and he wasn't a bit unfriendly. Then I had Donald's girlfriend working with me, Deborah Dixon, a beautiful Texan girl who I liked very much and who is a very good friend of mine still.

"As usual everything was done in a tremendous hurry and on an incredibly tight budget. I had a sort of brief which was to do with me knowing Mick very well, and thinking that he might feel comfortable in a setting that I had devised. I was making some things and hiring some things from film-hire places and mixing it all up with stuff from Morocco, where I used to go to a lot, and where you could still have things made cheaply: big straw hangings on the walls. Anyway spinning all that up and inventing it as you went along: the great thing about that world is the



Real disturbance: James Fox, Anita Pallenberg and Mick Jagger

immediacy of it, the accidents and the sudden mad demands, and the chemistry was good between those concerned.

"There were lots of tensions. That was part of the recipe. I don't think Donald would think it was deliberate, but he liked to tweak things about a bit: he always enjoyed that in his relationships. He always liked relationships that involved more than two people, so it was absolutely home territory as far as he was concerned: two or three girls, dope, he needed all that. An idea would come into Donald's head, and one would leap to try to make it happen. It was quite beautiful to look at, I think. Is there going to be a lot of stuff about drugs in this piece? There has to be some, because it's hugely relevant, actually."

The *pièce-de-resistance* is Turner's ground floor reception room: a large, panelled space with parquet floor and floor-to-ceiling windows, doubly covered with drapes and curtains. Entering, Chas is greeted by a stuffed polar bear: beyond some African screens, Turner's desk comes into view, covered with papers and Tiffany lamps (already high camp taste); beyond this, the camera pans round the detritus of the musician off the road – TEACs, amplifier leads, reel-to-reel tapes, microphones. There is a large, formal carved fireplace, two huge floor speakers, a chill-out area, and then more screens. The ceiling is covered with a mirror: it's only through this dizzying perspective that Chas catches his first glimpse of Turner, moving in and out of the screens like a fish through seaweed.

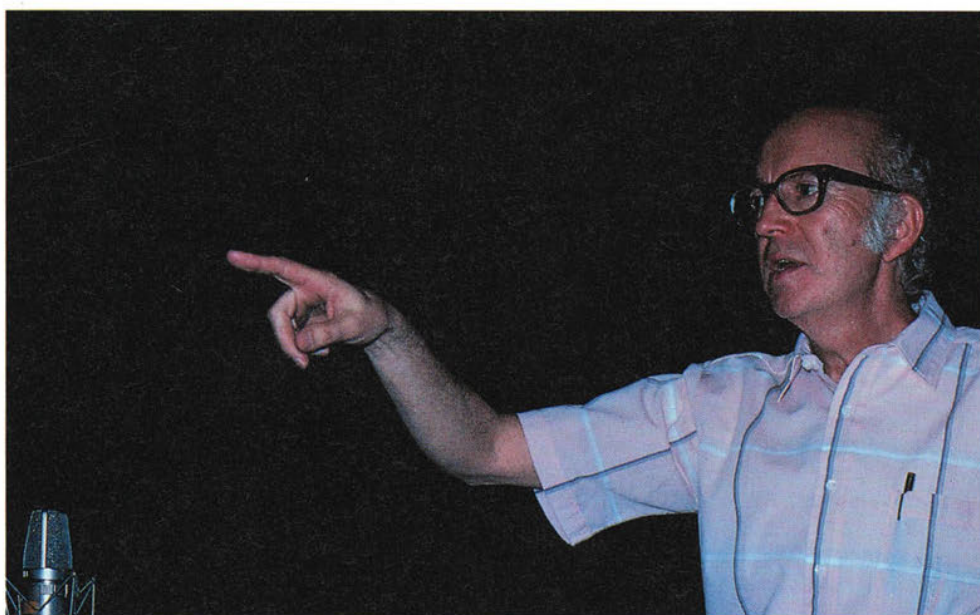
Set is implicitly linked to characterisation: when, at the start of their halting exchange, Turner comments on Chas' cigarette ash – "That carpet's 200 years old" – you can feel the gulf opening up between the two men. Conversely, when Chas ascends the stairs to the rocking horse bathroom, he crosses over into Turner's world: when, at the climacteric, he rises to the vertiginous bedroom – all swirling drapes, Moroccan cushions, overseen by a cage-like design of wood and wire – he has penetrated the core of Turner's being. Here, the final bullet is as much an act of love, or the key which unlocks another reality: there are many kinds of death, and many ways of being reincarnated.

Unrevealed until halfway through, the Turner House is nevertheless the locus for this rebus of transformation: from now on, the pace slows from thriller to enclosed psychodrama. The outside world slips away, remarkable only for its drabness and violence. As the physical manifestation of the psychic maze within which Turner is trapped, this house-as-familiar ceases to exist once Chas shoots its conjurer: in the dying minutes, Rosebloom (Stanley Meadows) goes round checking all the rooms, leaving Pherber (Anita Pallenberg) in the lift, forever trapped in transition between Chas' basement and Turner's state-rooms, in the zone between the quotidian and the underworld, life and death. Turner himself is left as a corpse in the basement cupboard, slumped in front of several empty picture frames: the ultimate art object.

"Mick Jagger drew on what he knew to play Turner," Gibbs says; "He knew Brian Jones very well indeed. Brian was a fairly impossible creature, but we all knew him very well, and the whole thing was extremely incestuous, wasn't it? The concept and the way it was made: it was all people who knew each other, and different kinds of relationships going on. I absolutely loved working on the film, because it was completely new to me. I've always loved putting things together. Everything I buy, I'm always culling and rejecting, everything is like a distillation of your being. So it's great to do something like that and get it all out of your system.

"These were composed, invented, beautiful worlds, drawing on all sorts of forces and ingredients: chemistry of people, objects, clashes of cultures and ideas, a lot of visual surprises. In a way, you could think of this time as an alchemical experiment: we were all very interested in that hocus pocus. It was also about the transforming quality of hallucinogenics on the collective consciousness – we were all quite young and innocent about some things, and although we were wising each other up, we were also amusing each other. Definitely initiating each other into other ways of seeing and looking and hearing and enjoying and loving. I was born a little too early for the 60s, but I did get a huge buzz out of it all, and it didn't do me any harm: in fact, it did me good. It was a blessing."

Formerly lead alto with Stan Kenton, Lennie Niehaus has composed the music for many Clint Eastwood films, including 'Bird' and the recent 'The Bridges of Madison County'. He talks to David Meeker; opposite, a Niehaus filmography



CHEROKEE TO MADISON COUNTY

Lennie Niehaus was born in St Louis, Missouri, on 1 June 1929. His family soon moved to Los Angeles where, at 11, he studied violin, oboe and bassoon, taking up alto sax at 13. He attended LA City College and LA State College, receiving his BA degree and majoring in music theory and composition. He had played with local bands and Jerry Wald's Orchestra when he was invited to join Stan Kenton, but his tenure was interrupted by military service in 1952. He used his time by organising a jazz group and by writing experimentally for various instrumental combinations.

Back in Los Angeles following demob in 1954 he was playing with Shorty Rogers' Giants when he was signed by Contemporary Records for what became a series of highly successful albums under his own name. At the same time he rejoined Stan Kenton's Orchestra as arranger and lead alto soloist, firmly establishing his international reputation as a gifted instrumentalist, arranger, composer and leader. With his friend and fellow arranger/composer Jerry Fielding, he took up orchestrating full time and worked (mostly uncredited) on the majority of Fielding's film scores from 1962, until Fielding's untimely death in 1980, since when he has worked regularly as a film composer with Clint Eastwood. Jazz played an important role in many of his scores with Fielding (*The Enforcer*, *The Gauntlet*, *The Big Sleep* and others) and Niehaus was well in tune with Clint Eastwood to create the appropriate style of music, whether jazz as in *Bird*, or a more classical style, as in *Unforgiven*. His last jazz album to date was recorded in 1989.

David Meeker: *The Bridges of Madison County* – which concerns a four-day love affair between Francesca (Meryl Streep) and Robert (Clint Eastwood), a photographer, and its discovery by Francesca's children after her death – strikes me as having been a particularly challenging assignment; a main theme co-composed with Clint Eastwood, as something to get your orchestrating teeth into, plus a

handful of very specific 60s recordings to be used organically.

Lennie Niehaus: Apparently Bruce Beresford was originally slated (among others) to direct the movie and it was planned to use country guitar songs throughout, as in the book, where Clint's character carries an acoustic guitar around with him. In fact the author, Robert James Waller, had already written and recorded an album of songs about the characters. But Clint didn't want country guitar. He wanted ballad jazz and a bit of swing. And he wanted to use multi-instrumentalist James Rivers, who we had used previously on the underscore of *Tightrope*. So anyway Clint wrote this little tune, which we eventually called 'Doe Eyes' on the album, and he brought in this piano player, Michael Lang, Jennings Lang's son, to demonstrate it for me. Clint and I talked about it and I envisioned a development, with a large string orchestra to sing out the theme. Clint thought that the piano should be the only solo instrument but I thought that something additional was required. He didn't agree but let me go away and try something. So I got an EVI (Electronic Valve Instrument), which can sound like different kinds of flutes, and we tried it in the scene where Clint is lying on the bed – and he loved it. We even used it again where Francesca goes to visit Lucy. When listening to the playback the recording musicians said to me, "What a beautiful cue," and I said, "Thank you." But before things got out of hand I took Clint aside and expressed my embarrassment at the praise for what was, after all, his melody. "Oh no," he said, "don't be silly. You made it. Anyone can bash out a tune on the piano!"

DM: The songs in *Bridges* are used so specifically that I wonder whether they were actually incorporated into the script?

LN: That was all done by Clint, who has a vast knowledge of standard songs, but I think Bruce Ricker advised on 'Poinciana' and maybe the Johnny Hartman numbers. Meryl Streep has said how helpful it was, when shooting the dance

sequence in the kitchen, to have had 'I See Your Face Before Me' actually playing on set. But did you notice how the sequence runs longer than the three-minute recording, yet the song just carries on? It's cleverly edited so that the first 16 bars and the bridge are repeated without ever getting to the final eight bars.

DM: Except for your theme, all the music in the picture is used as source music – apart from one sequence where I find myself confused. Following the 'For All We Know' dance scene Clint cuts back to the present day, yet keeps the song running. It can no longer be source music.

LN: That was strange. But in the same way the main theme, which is used as a *leitmotiv* for the character of Francesca, continues on to the son and daughter after the letter-reading scene. Steven Spielberg [whose production company Amblin co-produced *Bridges*] agreed that the music should overlap in this way: the children have got to know their mother a little better.

DM: The use of Irene Kral's recording of 'It's a Wonderful World' is a gentle piece of irony.

LN: Yes, it works, but perhaps because of my background the pieces that really interested me were the Ahmad Jamal and Johnny Hartman numbers. The Ahmad Jamal recording of 'Poinciana', which has an Afro-Cuban beat, is heard when they're in the kitchen and Clint talks about Africa and makes his funny face.

DM: Let's talk about the early years. Your Stan Kenton period is well documented elsewhere, but tell me about your first meeting with Eastwood during your military service in 1952.

LN: Well, Clint got into the army a year, I think, before I did. That must have been around 1951. When we met I soon learnt that he was deeply interested in jazz. He used to be a bartender in the NCO's club where I would be playing with my quartet or my octet. At weekends I'd play in a club near Monterey and he used to come in and I'd see his long, lanky body, feet on a chair, drinking a beer and listening to me play.

DM: Was he then intending to take up acting?

LN: We never really discussed our futures and he left the army before I did. He knew that I'd been drafted while I was with Stan Kenton and that I was anxious to rejoin the band just as soon as I could: Lee Konitz had replaced me. Luckily there was an opening in the band for me when I was eventually discharged.

DM: Did you and Clint keep in touch?

LN: Not really, though we did speak occasionally. He was doing *Rawhide* by then. We got closer when I started orchestrating for Jerry Fielding.

DM: During those Kenton years you were lead alto soloist; your great solo spot was on Bill Holman's arrangement of Ray Noble's 'Cherokee'.

LN: It was my fast showpiece. I liked it a lot.

DM: It's interesting that many years later when you were doing *Bird* the very same 'Cherokee' should play a vital role in the film. And I do admire the visual metaphor in the film of the cymbal being thrown to the floor when the fledgling Bird gets stuck on the bridge of 'Cherokee'. [Note: in this context "bridge" is the American term for the English "middle eight", the third lot of eight bars in the standard 32-bar AABA chord sequence.]

LN: Well, between us we selected the music that we thought best for the movie, and 'Cherokee' came to be written into the script, as did other numbers

that Charlie Parker had recorded: 'April in Paris', 'Laura' and so on. But 'Cherokee' had always been one of Bird's favourite tunes and a challenge for him; that bridge with its key changes is hard to get over. People say that if you can play that you can play almost anything.

DM: How did you initially get into orchestrating?

LN: Around 1960 I'd been writing a lot for the Stan Kenton Mellophonium Orchestra and for my own group. Jerry Fielding at that time had a showband backing what I can only describe as Las Vegas acts and television shows. He was a very liberal kind of guy. He'd been blacklisted and couldn't work in LA for a while – it was guilt through association with such friends as Truman Capote and Jason Robards. I remember he had candles in the shape of Richard Nixon which he would light and wait for the head to fall off! Anyway, I started to work with him, arranging and composing for shows with Debbie Reynolds, Mitzi Gaynor, Eddie Fisher and so on. Then when Jerry came back to Hollywood in 1962 to become a movie composer, he asked me to orchestrate for him. I worked on most of his scores until his early death in 1980. Greig McRitchie was also working with him then. You know, Jerry had no sense of time. He had perhaps five to six weeks to come up with a score and ▶

FILMOGRAPHY

Compiled by Markku Salmi and David Meeker

1962-1980

Orchestrations for composer Jerry Fielding on some 40 motion pictures, including *The Wild Bunch* (Sam Peckinpah, 1969), *Lawman* (Michael Winner, 1970), *Johnny Got His Gun* (Dalton Trumbo, 1971), *Straw Dogs* (Sam Peckinpah, 1971), *Junior Bonner* (Sam Peckinpah, 1972), *The Gambler* (Karel Reisz, 1974), *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* (Sam Peckinpah, 1974), *The Killer Elite* (Sam Peckinpah, 1975), *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (Clint Eastwood, 1976), *The Enforcer* (James Fargo, 1976), *The Gauntlet* (Clint Eastwood, 1977), *Gray Lady Down* (David Greene, 1977), *The Big Sleep* (Michael Winner, 1978), *Escape from Alcatraz* (Don Siegel, 1979).



'Escape from Alcatraz', orchestrated by Lennie Niehaus

1982/3

FAERIE TALE THEATRE

Television series. Niehaus scored four episodes with music director Van Dyke Parks.

1984

CITY HEAT (Richard Benjamin)

UNDER THE VOLCANO (John Huston)

"I did some of the orchestrations simply to work with the composer Alex North, one of the great masters."

TIGHTROPE (Richard Tuggle)

"A dark score to complement a dark movie."

1985

SESAME STREET PRESENTS FOLLOW THAT BIRD (Ken Kwapis)

Co-composer with Van Dyke Parks.

PALE RIDER (Clint Eastwood)

AMAZING STORIES episode **VANESSA IN THE GARDEN** (Clint Eastwood, for television)

"A piano score beautifully played by Michael Lang."

1986

BACK TO SCHOOL (Alan Metter)

"I just conducted Danny Elfman's score."

EMANON (Stuart Paul)

"Try saying it backwards."

HEARTBREAK RIDGE (Clint Eastwood)

NEVER TOO YOUNG TO DIE (Steven Paul)

RATBOY (Sondra Locke)



Lennie Niehaus, above left; Meryl Streep and Clint Eastwood in 'The Bridges of Madison County', above

◀ would spend the first three on one cue so he needed a lot of help to get the whole 55 minutes completed on time. He'd ask us to do far more than an orchestrator normally would. He'd give us the string parts and ask us to add brass or percussion. We were more like co-composers. But Jerry had a tremendous talent and I enjoyed working with him all those years.

DM: I was surprised to find that the score for *The Big Sleep* (1978) – superior music for an inferior movie – was virtually the same as for *Hunters are For Killing* (1970).

LN: Jerry always took on too much work. And his work ethics could kill a person. I thought if I stay with this guy I'm going to die young. He had a room full of his old scores and he'd say to me, "Use these eight bars from *Hunters are For Killing* and these eight bars from *Chato's Land*," and he'd give me all these bits and pieces that didn't match together and I'd try and make them work. I learnt a lot from him because he was also a great orchestrator.

DM: Jerry had a special working relationship with Sam Peckinpah, Michael Winner and, later on, Clint Eastwood.

LN: Yes, but with Peckinpah there were always the ones that got away – those pictures with Kris Kristofferson. Sam and Kris would be getting drunk together and Kris would start playing tunes; Sam would think they were great and would take them to Jerry who would say they were junk and if you really want to use them then you'd better get him to write the score. But whenever Sam left Jerry alone, as on *The Wild Bunch* or *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*, Jerry came up with wonderful music.

DM: Your relationship with Clint Eastwood restarted in 1976 with *The Outlaw Josey Wales*.

LN: It was funny. Here we are going down to the recording session and Clint sees me and comes running over. Jerry's standing there on the podium and he looks around at Clint and me laughing and talking and he's almost saying, "What is my orchestrator doing sitting with the boss and having a good time?" He didn't know about our old days in the army and all that.

DM: At this point I'd like to ask if you would define some responsibilities for me. A finished movie score is a complex amalgam of hard work by many people, more of whom receive screen credit nowadays than used to. But how do you define the difference between orchestrating and arranging?

LN: That's a good question. An orchestrator is one who takes what the composer writes, in the form of sketches, and who transposes it on to a score. Those sketches should give him everything he needs, that is, the precise constitution of the orchestra, where flutes should be used or where an oboe should play the melody, etcetera. One needs an almost intuitive understanding of the composer's vision. On the other hand, an arranger takes existing material, usually a song, and creates his own composition around it using his own instrumentation. A good arranger, say Johnny Mandel, takes a song like 'The Folks Who Live on the Hill' and he makes it his own; the orchestral colours and lines can be as or even more important than the melody he's working from.

DM: What is the job of the music supervisor?

LN: He or she comes up with appropriate pre-composed songs for incorporation in the soundtrack.

So the music supervisor is a picker of tunes!

DM: And the music co-ordinator?

LN: A kind of researcher who negotiates usage: copyright and fees, that sort of thing.

DM: More importantly, the music editor, particularly in terms of Donald Harris who has worked so regularly with you?

LN: Nowadays every composer has his own music editor. He's hired by the production company and if for instance I work away from Malpas I'll take Harris with me. Working in close collaboration with the composer and on instructions from the director, he has the exacting task of spotting the film; noting the precise frame where music is to start and stop: "Shall we start the music as he opens the door or as he steps inside? Don't we need some music here? Do we carry it over to the next shot or cut it or fade it?" He then prepares the cue sheets and I take them home and compose to his timings. During recording he keeps the log for the different takes and prepares the recording for the dubbing studio and the mixer. He's my right hand and we work well together, especially on Clint's films – because, having done so many pictures with Clint, we know by now almost exactly what he wants and he trusts us. Yet sometimes it can become a matter of trial and error. I remember on *Unforgiven* I'd come up with six cues for the saloon shooting sequence; Clint liked the music for going in and coming out, but you know, he's very fond of his sound effects and doesn't like music over them.

DM: You do much of your recording at Burbank with Bobby Fernandez.

LN: He's a marvellous recording engineer. He knows every sound that an instrument can make and he understands the sound that I want without me having to tell him.

DM: His work on *Bird* was sensational. That must have had some of the most complex music tracks ever attempted.

LN: Yes. The result was so smooth that people don't realise the amount of hard work that went into them. The way we isolated Charlie Parker's solos from recordings and added new rhythm accompaniment – and artificially extended some numbers: I recall the party sequence where we were using 'How High the Moon' and Bird takes out his horn and plays a few bars to a girl (incidentally that was me playing!) before he joins the band and plays his existing solo, so that a 32-bar tune became a 34-bar tune!

DM: In *Unforgiven* the main title theme, 'Claudia's theme', was actually composed by Clint, which you then orchestrated. Why didn't he get screen credit for it?

LN: He wouldn't take it. That's an example of me arranging a tune rather than orchestrating. He didn't give me anything but the melody. I put the moving figures in and did the instrumentation. Clint had his son's music teacher write down the melody for me; a simple guitar line. I took it from there. Clint seemed quite happy with what I had done to his little tune.

DM: You used the late guitarist Laurindo Almeida for the recording. He goes back to the Stan Kenton Orchestra of the 1950s too, but perhaps this is where we came in...

Interview at Niehaus' home in Thousand Oaks, California, on 9 July 1995. 'The Bridges of Madison County' opens on 15 September and is reviewed on page 46 of this issue



Jack Nicholson: 'The Two Jakes', music conducted by Niehaus

1988

BIRD (Clint Eastwood)

THE CHILD SAVER (Stan Lathan, for television)

EASTWOOD (Joe Hyams, for television)

A little-known promotional film made at the time of 'Bird'. Niehaus is seen on-set supervising the music.

1990

WHITE HUNTER, BLACK HEART (Clint Eastwood)

The jazz sequence was shot in London by Eastwood without Niehaus' participation.

THE ROOKIE (Clint Eastwood)

THE TWO JAKES (Jack Nicholson)

"I orchestrated and conducted to help out Van Dyke Parks who I had worked with some years earlier on 'Faerie Tale Theatre'."

1992

UNFORGIVEN (Clint Eastwood)

1993

LUSH LIFE (Michael Elias, for television)

"After all the work that Forest Whitaker put in learning the rudiments of alto sax for 'Bird' it was eccentric to have him playing trumpet while Jeff Goldblum played the alto sax. But the film had been written for a black trumpet player and a white sax player!"

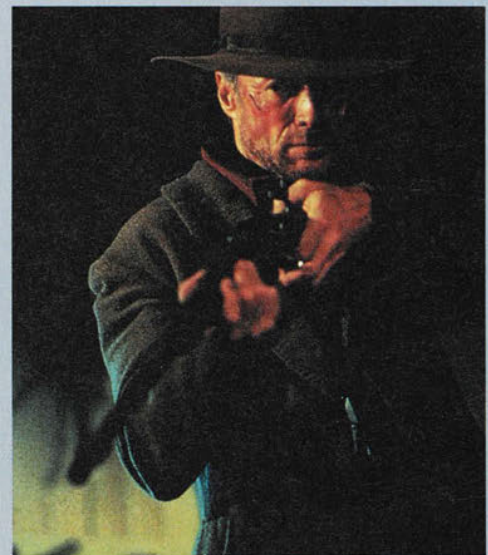
A PERFECT WORLD (Clint Eastwood)

1995

THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY (Clint Eastwood)

Main theme co-composed with Clint Eastwood.

(Some Niehaus filmographies credit him with the score for 'Hot Men' [1989]. This Swing Era story was never made, though much of Niehaus' score was completed.)



Clint Eastwood: 'Unforgiven', music by Niehaus

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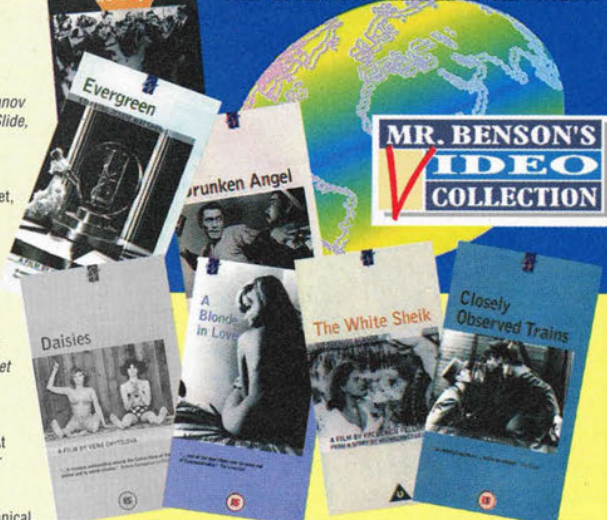
Accatone, Pier Paolo Pasolini
 Alice In The Cities, Wim Wenders
 America, America, Elia Kazan
 An Enemy Of The People, Satyajit Ray
 Animation On 4 Vol 1, Animation
 Aparajito, Satyajit Ray
 Arsenal Stadium Mystery,
 Thorold Dickinson
 The Ascent, Larisa Shepitko
 Baby Doll, Elia Kazan
 The Bad Sleep Well, Akira Kurosawa
 Before The Revolution,
 Bernardo Bertolucci
 The Big Clubs, Joachim Kreck
 Blanche Fury, Marc Allegret
 Bleak Moments, Mike Leigh
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 Daisies, Vera Chytilova
 Dark Eyes, Nikita Mikhalkov
 Daughters Of The Dust, Julie Dash
 December Bride, Thaddeus O'Sullivan
 2 Ou 3 Choses Que Je Sais d'Elle,
 Jean-Luc Goddard
 Drunken Angel, Akira Kurosawa
 Eat The Peach, Peter Ormrod
 Ecotoons, WWF
 The Edge Of The World, Michael Powell
 Evergreen, Victor Saville
 Fellow Traveller, Philip Saville
 First A Girl, Victor Saville
 Free Cinema, Anderson, Reis, Fletcher
 The Goalkeeper's Fear Of The Penalty,
 Wim Wenders

The Great Mr Handel, Michael Walker
 Harold Lloyd - The Cat's Paw, Sam Taylor
 Harold Lloyd - Feet First, Clyde Bruckman
 Harold Lloyd - Girl Shy, Fred Newmeyer,
 Sam Taylor
 Harold Lloyd - Movie Crazy,
 Clyde Bruckman
 Harold Lloyd - Speedy, Ted Wilde
 Hawks And Sparrows, Pier Paolo Pasolini
 House Of Games, David Mamet
 Hush A Bye Baby,
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 The Intruder, Roger Corman
 I See A Dark Stranger, Frank Launder
 Jane Campion: Three Short Films,
 Compilation
 La Jetée, Chris Marker
 Le Jour Se Lève, Marcel Carné
 King And Country, Joseph Losey
 King Of The Road, Wim Wenders
 Ladislav Starewicz: Selected Films,
 Ladislav Starewicz
 The Last Bolshevik, Chris Marker
 Lights Of Variety,
 Federico Fellini/A Lattuada
 Lower Depths, Akira Kurosawa
 Oedipus Rex, Pier Paolo Pasolini
 On The Black Hill, Andrew Grieve
 Orfeu Negro (Black Orpheus),
 Marcel Camus
 Madonna Of The Seven Moons,
 Arthur Crabtree
 Mapantsula, Oliver Schmitz
 Masculin Feminin, Jean Luc Goddard
 My Childhood/My Ain Folk, Bill Douglas
 My Way Home, Bill Douglas
 90 Degrees South, Herbert Ponting
 Pather Panchali, Satyajit Ray
 Preston Sturges, Kenneth Bowser
 Preet Parn: Selected Films, Preet Parn
 The Quare Fellow, Arthur Dreifuss
 Red Ensign, Michael Powell

Rogopag, Rossellini, Godard,
 Pasolini, Gregorotti
 La Ronde, Max Ophuls
 Salaam Bombay!, Mira Nair
 Sans Soleil, Chris Marker
 Shadows Of Our Forgotten
 Ancestors, Sergio Paradjanov
 Silent Feminists, Anthony Slide,
 Jeffrey Goodman
 The Silver Fleet,
 Michael Powell
 The Shop On The High Street,
 Jan Kadar/Elmar Klos
 The Spider's Stratagem,
 Bernardo Bertolucci
 La Terra Trema,
 Luchino Visconti
 Testament d'Orphée,
 Jean Cocteau
 The Three Of Us, Pupi Avati
 Things Change, David Mamet
 Terence Davies Trilogy,
 Terence Davies
 Tokyo-Ga, Wim Wenders
 Turn Of The Tide/The Man At
 The Gate, Norman Walker
 Two Thousand Women,
 Frank Launder
 Unfinished Piece For Mechanical
 Piano, Nikita Mikhalkov
 Voyage To Italy, Roberto Rossellini
 Wayward Girls And Wicked Women Vol 1
 Wayward Girls And Wicked Women Vol 2
 Wayward Girls And Wicked Women Vol 3
 (the three titles above are Animation)
 Week-End, Jean-Luc Goddard
 The White Sheik, Federico Fellini
 Wittgenstein, Roberto Rossellini
 The Wonderful World Of Dogs,
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 The World Of Apu, Satyajit Ray
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AFRICAN CONVERSATIONS

For Africa '95, classic and contemporary African cinema is screening across the country. To complement this, the African and Caribbean Unit and Sight and Sound interview African directors about film past and future. Below, June Givanni talks with Djibril Diop Mambety, the rebellious Senegalese director of 'Touki-Bouki' and 'Hyènes'

● The avant-garde is not a term that comes readily to the mind when one thinks of African Cinema. Yet the cinemas of the continent hold as many styles, idiosyncrasies and wonders as there are film-makers. One of the most stylish and unconventional is Djibril Diop Mambety, the Senegalese director whose films have taken some of the most emphatic steps in the development of African cinema.

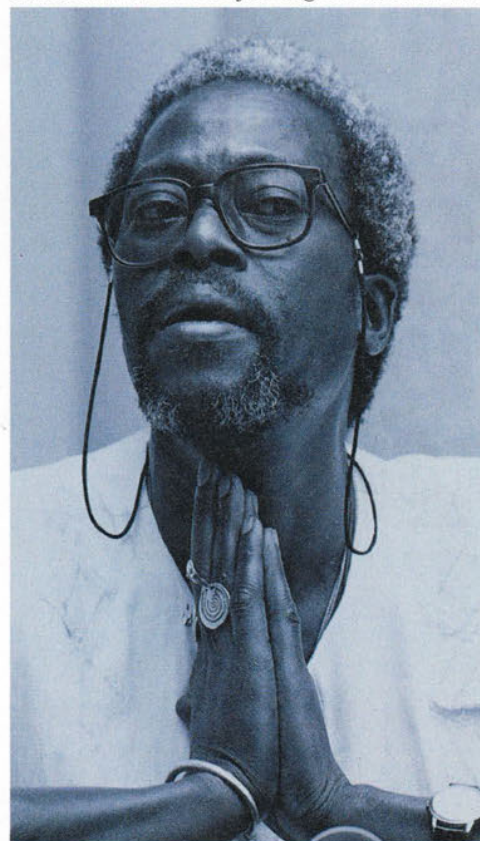
Fired by a limitless imagination, a fearless sense of the 'possible' and a rebellious disregard for convention, he is a product of the newfound confidence and pride in black culture and civilisation known as the Négritude Movement which was at its most influential period in the 1960s. This movement, which started in the 1930s, was the most significant cultural development at the time of the Independence impulse in Africa, and has been described (by Imruh Bakari) as "an artistic response (mainly through literature) by African and Caribbean intellectuals to racism and the denigration of Africa": its architects were Leon G. Dumas, the French Guyanese writer, Aimé Césaire the Martiniquan writer and politician – and Leopold Senghor, writer and President of Senegal. A key celebration of such thinking, set in motion by Senghor and held in Dakar in 1966, was the *Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres*, the first of many on the continent, and a launchpad for many of Africa's most renowned artists.

Mambety worked first in theatre both as an actor and as a director with the Daniel Sorano Theatre, the Senegalese national company, before turning fully to film in the 1960s.

Djibril Diop Mambety: I grew up in an area called Colobane [*This is also the name of the town in his film 'Hyènes'*] where there was an open-air cinema called the ABC. We were very young, eight years old, and not allowed out at night because the area was dangerous. But in spite of this we escaped and went to the cinema. We had no money to buy a ticket so we listened to the films from outside. They were mainly Westerns and

Hindu films, and my favourites were the Westerns. I'd then creep back to my bed. Maybe that is why I attach a lot of importance to sound in my films, as I heard films for a number of years before I saw them. The music of the Westerns was really the beginning for me, and the first film I saw was a Western. I wanted to make films: so in the yard at home, with a white sheet, a candle behind it and cut-out images, friends in front, we made our own cinema, adding the images from our imagination to the sounds we listened to.

June Givanni: When did you begin to look at cin-



Always a film-maker: Djibril Diop Mambety

ema as an art form or as a career to follow?

DDM: From the moment I made a film with cut-outs on a white sheet, I felt I was a film-maker. I never felt cinema was something I would have to go and study and I never did. When I directed actors in front of a camera at the age of 19 in 1964, I had never set foot in any sort of film school in Europe.

That film became my first version of *Badou Boy*, in black and white with no dialogue, which I edited myself and which was reviewed by the famous film critic Georges Sadoul [in *Les Lettres Françaises*, April/May 1966] during the *Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres*. It was not presented officially, because it was the same year that Ousmane Sembene presented his first film at that festival, *Borom Sarett*. But for me the festival was sublime! I realised the confidence that Senghor had in black people and that he was right to celebrate black culture. I experienced this as the first significant stage in my life.

JG: Was there a specific idea or a statement of Senghor's which inspired you in this way?

DDM: It was his concrete thinking, with that of writer and historian Cheikh Anta Diop, which made me understand from that moment onwards that I belong to a people who had built Egypt, who had conceptualised the Pyramids, who effectively participated in the construction of an immense civilisation. That realisation opened for me the door to the universe.

There was a multiparty system and an atmosphere of liberty, of freedom of ideas and of choice in Senegalese politics in the 60s. It was a period that encouraged a free spirit, even though there was the responsibility of tradition and of Islam (because don't forget my father was an *imam*), despite which I was a rebel against all order at a very young age. I was simply convinced that God intended people to be free.

One day something serious happened. I was in school a few months before exams which I could have certainly passed. All of my teachers at the *lycée* in that period were European. I gave

them a lot of problems and was always in detention. Along came my first black teacher, who made me angry, so I took my things, left the school and never went back. I could not believe that finally when I get a black teacher he treated me bad, like the others. I was 16 and from that day I never went to school again.

JG: How did your parents react to your idea of being a film-maker?

DDM: My parents thought I was crazy. I was such a rebel, and they were angry. Except for my grandmother who had the wisdom to know that the value of a person is not measured by the number of qualifications or possessions he owns. After leaving school, I also left home. The world became my home, a beautiful home.

JG: Between the age of ten and 20, how did you progress from a white sheet to shooting, directing and editing your first film by yourself?

DDM: I went to the Islamic school and the French School. I wasn't a bad student but as I had already decided that I would not be a mathematician, or an academician, but a film-maker, film-making is where I directed my energies.

JG: Where did you get the film stock and the equipment to make the first *Badou Boy*?

DDM: The French Cultural Centre in Dakar. I went there with my script. The centre's director, Michel Letellier, gave me a cameraman and we began to shoot the film. This was in spite of the fact that it was the first time they were presented with someone who was convinced he was already a film-maker, and was asking for technical help. So this was how the first *Badou Boy* was made, when I was 21. I remade it four years later (1970) in colour.

JG: Where did you get the inspiration for *Badou Boy*, because it is very much an observation of life and people around you? How did you put this script together?

DDM: If one follows a character from morning to evening, one has a script. And if one observes a town day after day over the years one has an inexhaustible décor. The only motor, to turn these into a film, is the interest to do so.

JG: Many people regard you as an avant-garde film-maker. What do you think of this label?

DDM: What does avant-garde mean? It could indicate that man who, even before dawn, gets up to meet the sun while others continue to slumber. That is to say he who is not satisfied and who is still searching; it is a perpetual search; a thirst impossible to quench.

The impulse for what I do came at that moment of liberation back in the 60s, and is inspired more by my understanding of the limits of possibility than by any developments or trends in European film at the time.

It was also the moment that I stopped being racist and became a missionary. I became aware of the mission in the name of my people and of my culture, and my universal duty, which is to sing a song that the whole world can hear.

Take for instance the influence of African culture on contemporary art. The *masque nègre* is the proof. It has given a new face to contemporary painting over the last 70 years; one could ask Picasso for example how the *masque nègre* has generated cubism. That is the sort of contribution to cinematic writing that Africans can make. What there has been so far is reinvention



'Hyènes': the second part of Djibril's trilogy concerning power and insanity

of cinema: but one mustn't cheat by imitating others, one must be in tune with one's heritage. What the *masque nègre* has done to advance modern art, it can do for cinematic writing.

JG: So you see an important role for the film-maker, then? How can these functions be interpreted in the work that you do in cinema?

DDM: I suppose the word *griot* that you use in the title of this season (*Screen Griots*) is the word for what I do and the role that the film-maker has in society. It is a Wolof word, which for me means more than a storyteller; *griot* is a messenger of one's time, a visionary and the creator of the future.

JG: Isn't that a great responsibility?

DDM: The film-maker has much more to account for than an accountant or banker. He represents the collective consciousness of his people and he has to make it sublime and useful. The film-maker has to leave his mark on eternity.

JG: How have you tried to make an impact through your films? What was your strategy?

DDM: My current work in cinema is around a trilogy that speaks of power and insanity: from *Touki-Bouki* (1973) and *Hyènes* (Hyenas, 1992), my first two features, to *Malaika* my next feature. In *Touki-Bouki* you have the overthrow of power, and it involves dreams about escape to Europe, etcetera. In *Hyènes* the two characters from *Touki-Bouki* reappear: the girl who leaves to cross the Atlantic and the boy who stays on the continent as if he has betrayed her. This same girl comes back as a woman in *Hyènes* 50 years later, more rich than the World Bank, to reclaim the head of her lover for \$100 million. In *Malaika*, it is the man who comes back as the central character in yet another age, this time the fifteenth century. He returns as a "bad loser" – someone who in the constitution of the kingdom is allowed to kill with impunity any opponent he beats at the game of *Wore*. He travels to West Africa and eventually ends up in the Munhumutapa Kingdom of Zimbabwe to die. Wherever he goes he carries with him the logic that he can kill whoever he manages to outplay. He could be a caricature of the world's dictators. This character with death in his bag could be in Rwanda one minute and in Bosnia the next. If I

can finish these three films I will be very happy.

In parallel I am also making another trilogy of shorter films: *Tales of Ordinary People*. These are people who are important because they are the only ones who are consistent. They are simple yet courageous people. These people will never have bank accounts; for them, each day presents questions of survival. They are frank people. The first of this trilogy of shorts is *Le Franc* (*The Franc*) which has been invited to the London Film Festival this year; *La Petite vendeuse de soleil* (*The Little Girl who Sold Sunshine*) which I am about to shoot; and *L'Apprentis voleur* (*The Apprentice Thief*) is the third. They represent a way of paying tribute to the courage of street children. The love of children encourages me to defy the old, the corrupt and those who are rich without being rich in their souls.

JG: Why trilogies?

DDM: Because life is always in three stages: small, big, old. Life is a drama and a drama is always in three acts: prologue, story, epilogue. I see myself in between the small and big stages of life's trilogy.

But seriously, we as film-makers have the duty to be universal. We have just come to the end of the first century of cinema and really we have to win the second century. If I have any advice to give to African (and African diaspora) film-makers, I would say, above all do not try to please, if you want to be universal – and indeed if you want to be *heard*, still do not try too hard to please, but be true to your project. We are the people that are in charge of humanity's future, no matter where we find ourselves. African film-makers and African people both have their part to play at the great meeting of humanity. To use cinema to relieve us from our many handicaps, the lack of writing, illiteracy, knowing that cinema addresses itself not only to the eyes and ears but to the heart also. It is important to take seriously one's responsibility with the moving image, and to deal with all these historical and colonial handicaps. Cinema has to be put in the service of self-knowledge and that is urgent.

'*Touki-Bouki*' is showing at the NFT on 28 August and 'Hyènes' at the Barbican as part of the 'Mystery, Melodrama and Comedy' Season (6-19 October)

VISIONS OF

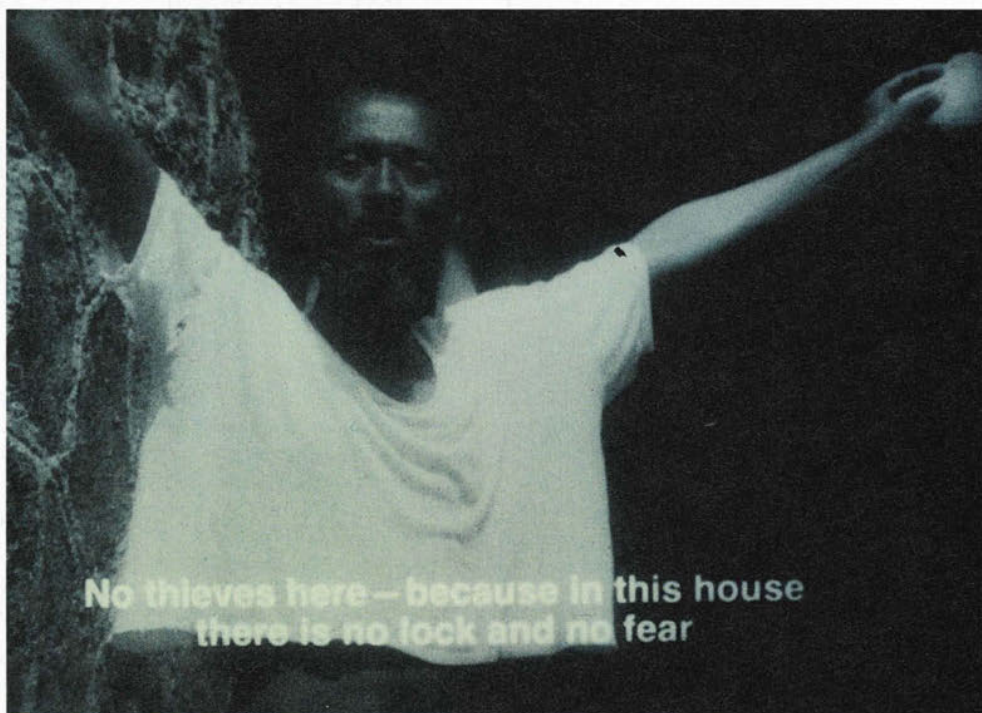
Haile Gerima reflects on 'Harvest: 3,000 Years', his evocative 1974 film about the contrast between an exploited peasant family and the land-owner

● During the pre-production period of *Harvest: 3,000 Years* (Mirt Sost Shi Amit) a dominant stylistic visual schema was provisionally agreed. The most prominent visual concepts came out of my own knowledge and understanding of a peasant society under an extreme feudal system. In my opinion, peasants are constantly and stereotypically depicted as victims, at best as "miserable creatures" (to cite a particular, colonialist impression of Ethiopians). I considered the peasants I wished to depict in my film to be dignified, honest and struggling under harsh circumstance, so we adopted a visual approach whereby the peasant family were always shot from a low angle in order to achieve a dignified portrayal of the spirit that I felt they embodied (after all, the actor depicting the peasant father happens to be my own uncle, by profession a proud peasant). On the other hand, under a feudal system, given my perception of landlords – whom I personally knew as selfish, greedy, short-term beings – we adopted a high wide-angle visual concept to achieve a distorted, dwarfed visual posture. Throughout the film, this concept was never compromised.

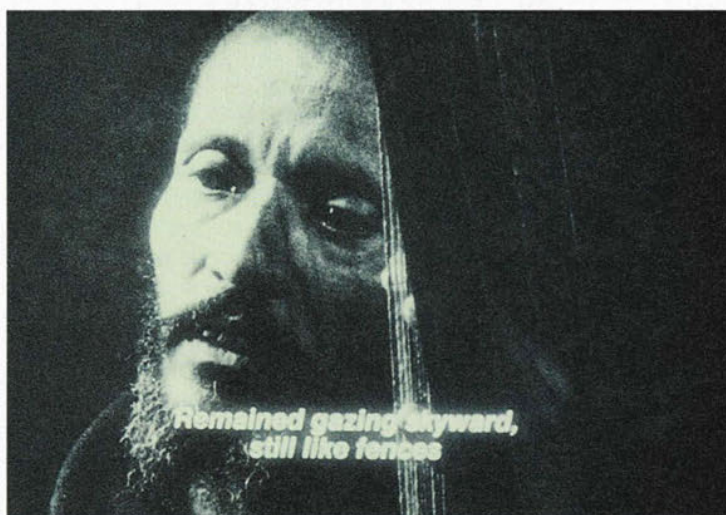
I must also point out that, beyond the dramatic narrative and the interactions between the different characters, I had also intended for *Harvest* to be a form of preservation of an economic, political and social relationship, and to be a visual witness to an environment during a particular period, and to a value system and an inherited tradition as it is practised.

Harvest is a drama of the unbridgeable contrasts between peasants and land-owners: between indifference and a grim, back-breaking existence as little more than beasts. A local madman, Kebebe, tries to persuade the son of the family to get himself an education. The daughter, Belectech, has a dream that makes plain to them their plight, and the way forward.

'*Harvest: 3000 Years*' is showing at the NFT on 31 August and 5 September, as part of the 'Screen Griots' Season, a Haile Gerima retrospective follows (2-14 September), also at the NFT



No thieves here – because in this house
there is no lock and no fear



Remained gazing skyward,
still like fences

▲ Kebebe again, in a local beer hole, is surrounded by disgruntled veterans of the Italian-Ethiopian war, and hides behind the veil of his begena, or lute, singing of class oppression. He skilfully marries contemporary political protest verses with the begena's ancient spiritual power. For those who have been exploited under this system, he is the one who best articulates their experience.

► The grandmother of the peasant family is asked to interpret her granddaughter Belectech's dream. With 3,000 years' earned wrinkles of wisdom, she is expected to unlock the mystery of the dream. In contrast to the foreshadowed turbulent future, the grandmother streamlines the true meaning by only interpreting the good side of the forecast. For the viewer she portrays a canvas of worry.

▲ Kebebe the madman, the catalyst, the manganese dioxide, is visually centred as a licensed agitator suspended between the contradictory class struggle of the peasant and the landlord. Free from the bondage, rules and regulations of so-called normal citizenship, he takes full opportunity to expose the backwardness and repression residing in the shadow of a real bridge built by colonial powers.



RESISTANCE



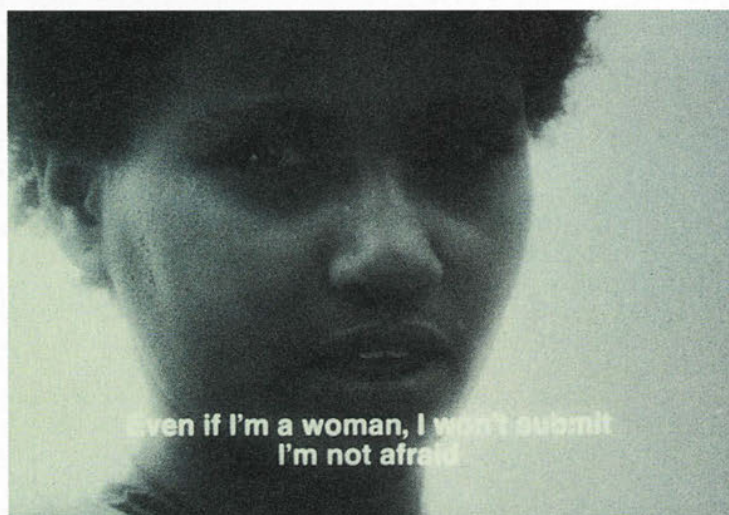
◀ This is one of the optical images we scattered through-out the film to help the viewer inside the dream of Belectech. In order to illustrate her and her family's brutal exploitation, we had to optically sandwich visual elements that illustrated effectively the reduction of human beings to the status of domestic animals under the bondage of the ox-bow.



▲ Here the landlord – who doesn't listen to his own nightmare and is perpetually trapped in his own system of

exploitation – exercises his short-term power. He is shot from high angle as a member of a dwarfed class.

► Here Belectech defiantly changes her posture of resistance, though only in her dream. Unsatisfied by her mother's interpretation of her dream, Belectech ultimately unlocks its true meaning, metaphor and symbolism. The young actress, who never acted before, did everything in one take. Her execution of this dramatic moment frightened even the crew, as we immortalised her by capturing her untrained true spirit from a low angle.



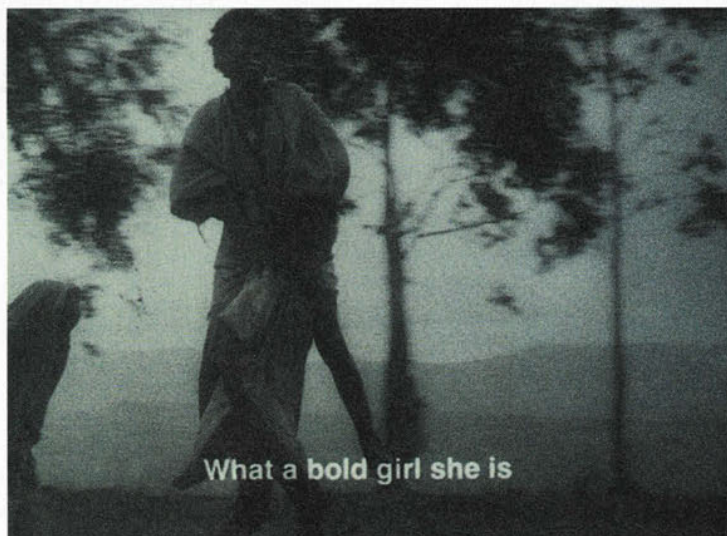
▼ Here again Belectech's dream is shown to the viewer, as a visual testimony, wherein a family, brutally exploited, and portrayed as next to domestic animals,

seize the moment, breaking the backbone of the system. The true dream is at last presented, to counter the misleading interpretation of the older generation.



▲ This is the first shot from behind the landlord, who is having his feet washed: when juxtaposed with the previous shot, of the shaved head of the grieving mother, the contrast represents the

future status of their class. We coined a name for the shot of the landlord: the "desert", implying his baldness was eternal. The shaven head of the mother will grow once more.



◀ Belectech, acting against tradition, forces herself into the traditional boys' game Inqual Inqual. She loses and ends up carrying this boy. But consistent with her character, she dreams of winning the same game and being carried on the shoulder of a boy who – in offscreen dialogue – disapproves of such a transgression of gender-role. The visual execution of this sequence dramatises her freedom and flight as a free spirit.

TORN APART



Chronicles of a quartier: a woman's world

While *Bab El-Oued City*, Merzak Allouache's latest film, was being filmed in the neighbourhoods of Algiers, in the spring of 1993, a State of Emergency was declared and a curfew imposed. In the film, Bab El-Oued, the *quartier* of Allouache's childhood, is presented as a neighbourhood gripped by fear and confusion after the riots and turmoil of October 1988. His protagonist lives there, a version of the urban Algerian anti-heroes of his earlier films, facing the problems they did in *Omar Gatlatto* (1976) and *Moughamarat Batel* (*Aventures d'un Heros*) (1978): a low standard of living, the monotony of daily routine, but now overpopulation also, and increasing violence.

When the fundamentalists plant loudspeakers on the rooftops of the *quartier* to broadcast the imam's sermons throughout the day, Boualem, a young baker who works at night, rips one out in a fit of anger and throws it in the sea. Said, the leader of the local fundamentalist gang, vows to make an example of him. The situation worsens when Yamina, Said's liberal sister who has been forced to take the veil, is caught trysting with Boualem, with whom she is in love. Soon, the whole community is caught up in the accelerating cycle of aggression.

Bab El-Oued City – which went on to win the International Critics' Award at Cannes as well as second prize at the Carthage Film Festival – was filmed, often clandestinely and in haste, in an atmosphere of extreme tension, where arrests, kidnappings and killings were commonplace; when artists and intellectuals were being shot daily by anonymous assassins. There was little time for retakes or in-depth analysis of dialogue. Everything was spur-of-the-moment; with many of the large cast first-time actors, much was improvised. Allouache does not hesitate to reveal the hidden Mediterranean charms of a tough neighbourhood that has become the heart of Islamic extremism, but the nostalgia with which he films his old haunts is compounded by a kind of fatalism, a sense of the "beginning of the end".

He sees himself as a teller of tales, a modern *hakawati* (a traditional Arabic story-teller). Like characters in a *hakawati* tale, his Algerian

"urban everymen" must triumph over adversity to succeed. But no two endings are alike. The story changes every time it's told. And with this film, there is a sobering sense of finality to the story's end, as the hero of *Bab El-Oued City* opts out of the narrative and takes a boat to France. Is he gone for good? Will he return in a different guise? Or will Allouache's next film, to be shot in a popular Parisian neighbourhood, be *Bab El-Oued II* in spirit?

Hadani Ditmars: What was it like for you to return to Bab El-Oued at a time of crisis?

Merzak Allouache: It's a popular, working-class neighbourhood in the centre of Algiers – it's not a suburb, it has a real history. But it's a neighbourhood where all the problems of the capital are evident. It's my neighbourhood, I know it well. Even in my first film, *Omar Gatlatto*, which I shot in Bab El-Oued, I wanted to show the problems of the Algerian youth, their standard of living, how they fit in to a newly independent nation in the middle of building itself up. How they negotiated the practical realities of everyday life – overcrowded accommodation, lack of work. I was particularly interested in their relationship to women – how there were two distinct societies, one male, one female, being created through various forms of segregation. 15 years later, I wanted to return to Bab El-Oued and make a film there.

I wanted to further explore the theme of the *quartier*, because in Algeria it has always been a place of refuge, where you can find yourself and feel at home, despite the problems, where you can find comfort. I don't know if it's like that in other places, but in Algeria, the *quartier* is a place where young people can find a certain solidarity – a place to go and hang out, be with friends – just exist. But what I noticed was that since October of 1988, and with the rise of fundamentalist Islam, the idea of the *quartier* and what it represented was shattered. There was a lot of division, even within families. I found this to be a rather dramatic development and I wanted to document this change – to produce a chronicle of the *quartier*. As a point of departure for this chronicle, I chose the problem of the loudspeaker, which infiltrates the neighbour-

hood with propaganda, functioning as a kind of all-powerful voice. I wanted to show how the young people dealt with this situation.

HD: Did this sense of the *quartier* as a place of warmth, of comfort, come from your own memories and personal experience?

MA: Yes, completely. I remember it as a true sanctuary. For young Algerians, especially for young men, it was more of a sanctuary than the family home. It was a place where young people could create their own sense of family. Because of the problem of the rural exodus and overpopulation, when there are 15 or 16 people living in one flat, naturally the young people spend more time outside on the street than inside. So in this way, the *quartier* and what it represented played a very important role in the lives of young people in Algiers. But now everything has changed. There is a great sense of mistrust between people. There is an endless cycle of violence which has become a daily reality.

So the *quartier* is no longer a cocoon which protects people, because there is now a great sense of fear and danger, as if anything could happen. This is a truly dramatic change, because the sense of belonging to a *quartier* was really the only thing left for young people. There is no longer a sense of security. The *quartier* was always a place where young people could recount their stories, their dreams, their lies – where they could find someone to listen to them. But now, in this situation of civil war, this is no longer possible.

HD: To what extent does the narrative, storytelling aspect of the *quartier* play a role in your films? Do you see it as a place where the oral tradition can naturally develop? And if so, has its voice now been silenced?

MA: The *quartier* was really a place where young people could express themselves. The importance of its role cannot be overstated. I've been dealing with this theme in my films since *Omar Gatlatto*. It was a place where values were formed. The young people even invented their own language, their own catchphrases. They speak a popular dialect which borrows words from French and Spanish, and changes existing words in Arabic. One of the important narrative



Chronicles of a quartier: a man's world

A state of emergency was declared in Algeria as its director Merzak Allouache was filming 'Bab El-Oued City'. He talks with Hadani Ditmars about story-telling, politics and nostalgia

traditions from the *quartier populaire* is the *chabi*. This is a song that celebrates the popular idea of the woman – the inaccessible woman, always behind a window, always “untouchable” – an expression of a certain kind of “courtly love”. The scene in *Bab El-Oued City* where the young protagonist sits on a rock by the beach and dreams of his inaccessible love expresses the essence of the *chabi*. But now even the songs and stories of the *quartier* have been shattered.

HD: At the end of *Bab El-Oued City* there is an image of the young woman – the Islamist leader's sister, played by Nadia Kaci – on the balcony, watching the boat depart for France. She is literally “closed in” on both sides by two different men. With this image of the cloistered woman – almost imprisoned or suffocated – were you trying to represent the imprisonment of the Algerian spirit, held hostage, as it were, by the present crisis?

MA: Yes, in a way, that was the image. What I really wanted to show was that Algeria today is a ‘blocked’ society. But in psychological terms, this ‘blockage’ already existed before the present crisis. What happened after the war of ‘Liberation’ for example, was disturbing. Women played an active role in the war, but when it was over, they were expected to return to their traditional roles. There is a tradition in Algeria of men gathering together in exclusively male groups. Their conversation often concerns women but if a woman approaches the group, they feel a bit destabilised. They don't really know how to communicate with her.

HD: In terms of the relationship between the two young “lovers” in the film, do you see *Bab El-Oued City* as following in a certain tradition of *Romeo and Juliet*, or even *West Side Story*?

MA: Yes there is that element of *Romeo and Juliet* in the film. But essentially what I wanted to show in the film was that there are already psychological problems between Algerian young men and women – that the rise in Islamism has augmented them. Certainly there are already problems that exist on a basic human level – as when a guy in the neighbourhood loves a girl whose brother objects – but Islamism complicates these basic problems.

HD: How did you approach the casting?

MA: In two ways. First of all, I approached established actors from the *Théâtre National*, to see if they were interested in participating in the film. But actually I prefer to work with actors who've had no training – young unknowns who are easier to mould. With more established actors, there's always the question of discussing the scenario, analysing the script and so on. I prefer the spontaneity of young unknown actors. They have a certain freshness and natural quality. I've always preferred this way of casting for my films. We actually advertised in the local press for young people who wanted to be in the film. I was astounded by the response. Over 1000 people turned up. The scene on the roof, with all the young women gossiping and hanging out the laundry – most of them were local girls from the neighbourhood who had never acted before. At the time their participation in the film was a courageous act. It was a period during which there were many assassinations and violent attacks in the street. And we were being “watched” throughout the filming.

In practical terms, this method of casting was preferable because of the way in which we had to shoot – that is very quickly, without attracting too much attention, changing sets frequently. It didn't allow for any discussion or analysis of the script.

HD: Besides the practical necessity, do you think that, aesthetically, this method of casting and shooting gave *Bab El-Oued City* a kind of documentary feel?

MA: Certainly. And I like to play with the documentary idea. Especially in an atmosphere as chaotic as Algiers, I like to arrive and see what presents itself – things that one cannot necessarily plan for. I like to film these unexpected situations – I don't let them get away. It's usually advantageous for the film. These scenes give a new dimension of spontaneity.

HD: What kinds of practical problems did you face while filming in Algiers?

MA: Well, first of all, we had to deal with the constant factor of danger. But what was most troubling was the random, unknown face of this danger. We were always afraid. We never knew

from one moment to the next what was going to happen. The period during which we were filming was an officially declared State of Emergency, and a curfew was imposed. Often we'd be filming and a few streets away there'd be sirens wailing – because of some violent incident. Sometimes, I asked myself, why am I filming? What's the point? It was very discouraging.

Certain technical things were impossible, like “travelling” shots. Everything had to be filmed quickly and discreetly. The conditions were not ideal, to say the least. But we did it in seven weeks. If it had been three months I don't think I would have made it.

HD: How did this experience compare with past productions in Algiers?

MA: Well, to put things in context I think it's necessary to explain a bit about film production in Algeria. It's different from production in Morocco or Tunisia because for 30 years cinema was state controlled. Film-makers functioned as civil servants. I worked in this way, and my first film was produced under this system. On one level, this system of state film production protected film-makers from harsh market realities. But on the other hand it posed the problem of state censorship and self-censure. It also meant that even if a film-maker were unable to produce a film, or could only make one every five years because of lack of funds, he would still receive a salary. There was inevitably a lot of corruption and a lot of bureaucratic waste. Finally, after the riots of 1988 which led to government concessions and a certain *multipartisme* [legalisation of different political parties], a system was devised where the Ministry of Culture would help specific film projects, but the film-maker would be able to keep the profits, and form his own production company. People were now talking about the beginning of a market economy, and the state monopoly on film production and distribution was easing up. This new system opened up opportunities for many film-makers. The Ministry established an independent committee composed of artists and writers who would judge the merit of a screenplay and distribute funds accordingly. For example, the Ministry would fund, say, 30 ►

◀ per cent of a project, and then after that the film-maker could choose his partners in co-production. Ironically, this new system began to develop at the same time as the rise in Islamic extremism. Writer Rachid Mimouni was the president of the commission; Tahar Djaout, who was assassinated last year [by Islamic militants] was also on the committee, as was the writer Merzak Baktache, who was wounded in an assassination attempt. There were several women also on the committee. It was an interesting venture – quite progressive actually. Technically, this system is still in place. I personally made *Bab El-Oued City* as a co-production with Channel 4 and ZDF, a German television station. So, one could say that the new system is better, more efficient than the old bureaucratic way. But on one level, it puts us more at risk. At the same time the question that we are now asking, as Algerian film-makers is: are we losing a sense of our own reality, are we compromising cinematic content for “northern” funding?

HD: Speaking of the evolution of Algerian film production, and of Algerian political evolution as a whole, to what extent do you see things as a generational conflict? Is the polarity of the current situation largely due to the tension between the “old guard” perceived as complicit with state corruption, and the new generation?

MA: Yes. I do see things in generational terms. There was a rapid rate of population growth in the 60s and 70s, but the children of this generation were not properly cared for, neither by the state education system, nor by their families, and left to fend for themselves. After Algerian Independence, there was a trend of “arabisation”. As a result, many teachers were brought in from Egypt, to instruct children in classical Arabic. But the majority of these teachers were Muslim “brothers”. This was how the new generation was formed.

HD: Did the “Muslim brother” then replace the father as a paternal figure, as a role model?

MA: Certainly. And the whole question is really about an identity crisis. When young adolescents have nothing to hold on to – nothing stable – it’s easy for the “brother” to usurp the paternal role. And since the *quartier* is no longer the refuge it once was, the mosque has in a way become the new kind of sanctuary, the cocoon – a new place to hang out together in a group. In this way, Islam has replaced the role of the family and of the *quartier*.

HD: What about the influence of American film and media in the Algerian youth culture?

MA: Well, we live in the audio-visual age, and there is no escaping this influence. I deliberately had the young characters – the guys in the “Islamist gang” – dress in leather jackets and jeans. I didn’t want to folklorise them. I mean, these are characters born from an urban milieu. They are both Islamicised and “Ramboised”.

HD: How does the new generation view the old?

MA: Well, I think that young Algerians see the old generation as one that for 30 years replaced French colonialism and exploited the country, as a corrupt, absolute power. They are viewed as being responsible for bringing Algeria to the brink of catastrophe. So the young people don’t identify with this “power”. They don’t even identify with the values of the War of Liberation

(or Independence). The way the old generation legitimised themselves was by constantly saying, “We’re the ones that brought about Independence from France.” But for the new generation this is already *dépassé*. Essentially, the old generation has lost touch with the reality of Algeria today – the reality that the young people experience daily.

HD: I’m interested to know how you, as a middle-aged film-maker, are perceived by the new generation. Recently I spoke to a young Algerian journalist in Paris about the “intellectual and artistic diaspora”. I mentioned a certain well-known Algerian writer in his 50s, at which point the journalist let loose a ten-minute tirade on the writer’s “complicity” with the

“I had the young guys in the ‘Islamist gang’ dress in leather jackets and jeans. I didn’t want to folklorise them. I mean, these are characters born from an urban milieu”

state, and the old regime. But when I mentioned your name, his attitude was quite different. He seemed to think you were OK.

MA: You know, in Algeria I live in a pretty down-to-earth neighbourhood – nothing special. And since I’ve always made films full of social criticism – and very often from a young person’s perspective – I’d like to think that young people in Algeria see me as being “on their side”. I think that when *Bab El-Oued City* is released in Algeria, it will be quite popular.

HD: Are you actually under threat from militant Islamic groups?

MA: I’m not entirely certain. I know that I’m in a category “at risk”.

HD: Are you targeted for “political” reasons?

MA: Political reasons? [thoughtfully] I don’t know. I think it’s more chaotic than that. It could be anything, really. They’re killing people who are explaining things, talking about what’s really going on. But who knows? I mean it might be a simple question of someone not liking a scene in my film.

HD: In *Bab El-Oued City*, the portrayal of the imam as a man of peace and tolerance who leaves the *quartier* in protest was an interesting contrast to the violence of the young extremists.

MA: Well, I wasn’t trying to make a kind of religious commentary. I was just interested in producing a chronicle of the *quartier* – by showing the different people that live there. There happened to be a peaceful, tolerant imam in the neighbourhood – like one that you could find anywhere. There was nothing abnormal in this.

HD: What opportunity is there today for a young Algerian who wants to become a film-maker?

MA: Hardly any. It’s an extremely difficult situation. I don’t know if I could advise anyone to take that path. Especially now. Satellite television has become increasingly important as a

medium. People now watch a lot of European and American channels – often as a way to get an alternative commentary on the events in Algeria. But sometimes it’s pure escapist entertainment. The last time I was in Algiers, I found myself alone one night in a friend’s flat. There was a curfew and I started to feel a bit afraid. So I turned on CNN and watched their live coverage of the events in Moscow, when the parliament was surrounded. It was strangely reassuring to watch events happening thousands of miles away.

HD: There seemed to be a real sense of nostalgia in the way you filmed *Bab El-Oued City*, particularly in the panoramas of the sea, and of the cityscape seen from the beach. And of, course, in the final scene, where the boat departs for France. Was this partly because of your own feelings toward your homeland?

MA: Well, the nostalgia was operating on different levels. On one level, I suppose, I was expressing my own reaction to an Algiers which has changed tremendously since my own youth. Mainly through modernisation. A lot of the old parts of the city have just disappeared. And the shots of the sea – well, in Algiers the sense of the Mediterranean is omnipresent. It’s something that I really miss in Paris, waking up and smelling the sea air, squinting from the brightness of the sun.

Certainly, the events that were unfolding at the time we were shooting also influenced this sense of nostalgia. Perhaps there was a feeling that this might be “the last time”. Some people have mentioned that in my films, there is even a sense of nostalgia for colonial times. I don’t know if I’d completely agree, but I admit to a certain nostalgia for the past. There is a *chabi* which speaks of the Algiers of the past, in almost mythical terms – describing all the beautiful old hotels, etcetera. But in real terms? Well, it’s easy to sentimentalise things.

On another level, the reality is that a lot of young people, like the hero of *Bab El-Oued City*, are leaving – for France, for Canada, for Australia. I don’t know if you noticed, but there was a subtle kind of homage to Elia Kazan’s *America* in the last scene between the two young “lovers”. The young man had suddenly grown a moustache – just like the scene in *America*, where the young guy is about to leave Greece for America and he comes to say goodbye. I wanted to show that he had reached a certain maturity. He had arrived at a turning point – a certain loss of innocence.

HD: What are your future plans, now that working in Algiers is no longer a viable option?

MA: Well you know, since 1982, I’ve been going back and forth [between Algiers and Paris] a lot. Nothing is definitive, but for the moment I’m based in France. I’m not interested in martyrdom. My next film will be set in Belleville [a Parisian neighbourhood with a high concentration of immigrants]. It’s going to be about a romance between a young Algerian drug dealer and a Senegalese girl.

The setting is different, but many of the issues explored will be the same. But this time, the “Romeo and Juliet” kind of opposition will come from the relationship between a black woman and an Algerian man.

DREAM ALLOUD

John Akomfrah, the Ghanaian-British director, on the exhilaration of African cinemas. With June Givanni

June Givanni: When were you first aware that there was something called African Cinema?

John Akomfrah: One of the first African films I saw was Jean-Pierre Dikongwe-Pipa's *Muna Moto*, in the late 70s or early 80s. I had seen an Ousmane Sembene film just before that and I was particularly struck by his *Black Girl*, after which I saw his *Money Order* and then *Muna Moto*. But it was really only when I saw Djibril's *Touki-Bouki* that all those films made sense. I watched them as part of a general package of 'Independent Cinema', 'Third Cinema' and 'Oppositional Cinema' from around the world: the Brazilian Glauber Rocha stuff (*Antonio Das Mortes*, *Black God, White Devil*), the Cuban stuff, Santiago Alvarez's work, Chris Marker's documentaries on Cuba and Chile and Fernando Solanas' *Hour of the Furnaces* from Argentina. I was exposed to all these at more or less the same time, so the frame of reference was narrative alternatives to First World Cinema, to Hollywood Cinema, and the films didn't have a regional but only a political specificity. They made sense initially more as a political or an independent than an 'African' Cinema. It was only much later when I watched *Touki-Bouki* that I began to understand that there could be something called African Cinema.

JG: What was so special about *Touki-Bouki*?

JA: Until I saw it, I hadn't understood an African Cinema to be political by its very nature, being born out of the process of cultural and post-colonial renewal for a lot of African countries. There isn't really anything anyone can call an African Cinema before independence. African national cinemas were born at exactly the same time as the African nations; through those films, nations tried to speak about themselves. *Touki-Bouki* was an extreme example of that trend, because you suddenly realised that you were watching this African dreaming aloud. It was such a shocking

revelation, that an African film needn't be attuned to poverty and socio-economic problems, but was marked instead by the kind of youth traumas that have been a stock-in-trade of cinemas all over the world. To have an African Cinema which taps into that sort of early-life crisis, bypassing what African Cinema is supposed to be – which is teaching somebody about how we live or how we die – just cuts straight through the pedagogic imperative: straight to this guy and his girlfriend who wanted to leave Africa. Paradoxically, because Djibril avoided the social problems, the economic hardship made perfect sense, just through observing what the characters do.

Touki-Bouki has a way of choreographing African life that is informed by an African urban sensibility: about restlessness, yearning, and a search for things that is unusual in African Cinema. Most African films are supposed to emanate from a place of authenticity, where people know themselves. They know the opening of Souleymane Cissé's *Yeelen*, as it were: we have lived in this village for thousands of years, we know ►

Djibril Diop Mambety's 'Touki-Bouki', an urban modernist film about restlessness, yearning and role-playing, below



BY STILES POSTERS AND DESIGNS

◀ ourselves because we know the soil, we know the trees, we know the skies, and so on. There is a harmony between 'man and landscape'. But *Touki-Bouki* has a kind of agnostic distance from that whole baggage, because it's characterised by this restlessness, by an urban African impatience with rhythm, time and storytelling. It's not the rural, pre-industrial pace of *Yeelen*. It's a much more aggressively modernist film, and you can understand why people have labelled it avant-garde.

It's not technically an avant-garde film, if by avant-garde people mean that it's trying to do something weird. It is more a portrait of African urban reality which is profoundly suffused with the tempering of that reality. Everybody knows about the restlessness that you see in towns and cities, in Accra and Lagos. This is one of the few films which actually captures that to-ing and fro-ing – not only through storytelling but also through a narrative parody of that movement. It's very graceful.

JG: Working in the UK, how do you feel about this category, African Cinema?

JA: One of the things I really admire about African Cinema is that it is constantly in a state of flux. It's as if they redefine it every two years, between every two FESPACOs (the Pan-African Film Festival of Ouagadougou) and that's quite healthy, because it means we are talking about film cultures which are in a state of becoming. There are still countries in Africa where people have never made a film. While Europe and North America are almost singing the funeral rites to cinema, people in other parts of the world have still to discover its potential. You really feel this in their film-making – that there is a possibility of rewriting some of the very basic rules of film grammar. For example, Ousmane Sembene said that one of the things he found problematic about his film *Ceddo* was the prevalence of dead time, what the French call "temps mort": moments in the film when it appears as if nothing's going on. For people like me though, that was precisely what was interesting about *Ceddo*, because it seemed to be characterised by a certain kind of movement. It was obviously a fiction, because we don't know what Africans walked and talked like in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but you had the feeling that you knew from watching this film. It had a way of excavating not only stories of the past, but also gestures and movements in a way that was entirely believable.

Whether something can be identified as a national cinema depends on whether there is a set of obsessions, of *traits* married to forms, which makes it identifiable. It's difficult to reduce a continental movement to sets of preoccupations – but there are enough established precepts about the right way to make an African film, if only because most of these film-makers have been turning up and showing their films to African audiences at such festivals as FESPACO for so long that they have now incorporated a sense of expectation of what an African Cinema should and should not have.

JG: Would you like to say what some of those characteristics are?

JA: This year at FESPACO a young white South African showed his film made in South Africa.

This man is based in Holland, so he has not been privy to any of the informal debates about what the imperatives of African Cinema should be. So in he comes with his film, *Confessions of a Yeoville Rapist*, which a lot of people just hated: to the point where somebody says to him this is not the kind of film that should be made in Africa. What that reveals is that there is clearly both a moral and an aesthetic dimension to African Cinema. Whether you like it or not, it is a cinema which will profoundly involved in the business of reconstruction and political analysis. There is broad acceptance of what these rules are amongst the film-makers. There are certain years in which suddenly people return to the source with a spate of films set in the rural area dealing with its rhythms, or with the questions of misunderstanding between the rural and the urban. There are certain years where there is a spate of films about African spirituality, possession, and

“Night of Counting the Years” was a revelation. I didn’t watch it as an African, but as part of a European cinema-going audience”

so on. I don't think it's just a coincidence that a guy in Ivory Coast and another in South Africa suddenly come up with films which broadly mirror one another.

You have to understand African Cinema relationally, it doesn't make sense on its own. The region has more or less had exactly the same relationship to the cinemas as to the cultures of the First World. These are countries which were locked *en masse* in colonial relationships with Europe and were then “given” their independence at more or less the same time, and began the process of cultural renewal using cinema. There are Africans who want to make films broadly as a way of establishing their national cinema, to ensure its survival against the endless onslaught of European and American Cinema. That is a continental impulse. There is a continental cinema because there is a continental desire to have that relationship with Euro-American Cinema.

JG: Why couldn't you identify the same impulse in Europe, or the Asian sub-continent?

JA: I'm sure that African film-makers would like the diversity that other film-makers enjoy, but unfortunately their histories, their cultural and political memories bind them together, because so many of these countries were beholden to the colonial imperative. Which very specifically structures the way in which those cultures work, politically, and what the cultural response is from the countries. You find an entire generation – Sembene, Paulin Vieyra, Dikongue-Pipa – coming out at exactly the same period, thinking about cinema in exactly the same terms. They have nothing in common except they are all schooled in African politics and want cinema to play a role in that.

JG: Very often in talking about the cinemas of the continent, the Africas north and south of the

Sahara are distinguished, separated into “Arab” and “African” Cinema. How does that affect this definition of African Cinema?

JA: Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco were all locked in colonial relations, and those were the four main countries that the cinemas we are talking about come from. So it's no coincidence that the earlier waves of film-makers, Tahar Cheriaa, Paulin Vieyra, spoke exactly the same language: they were after the same thing, the desire to establish a cultural alternative to European or American hegemony. Having said that, there is no reason why you can't have specificity. Just because the same broad cultural movements defined our activity doesn't mean we are then bound to obey those movements. We are not a family and the desire to make us a family is a false desire, it doesn't lead anywhere.

JG: What are the elements that have marked the development of African Cinema?

JA: Even if Africans hadn't been interested in cinema, other cinemas would have depicted and ‘created’ them. Many narratives that are now formulaic come from the encounter between Europe and Africa. Before John Ford ever staged a scene between a white man and an Apache, encountering and understanding the savagery of ‘the Other’ had already been tried and tested in the travel journals that came pouring out of Africa from the 1850s. This was still going on when cinema was born – cinema literally yanked out huge slices of this attitude to use. Many of Hollywood's rules about horror, fantasy and the heroic impulse were formulated in the encounter with Africa in photographs and books.

The interesting question is what kind of African Cinema exists after that fact. North African Cinema has gone different ways: melodrama, agitational stuff, Nasserite social realism and the documentary tradition. There is also an *auteur* cinema – and there are certain seminal films that made this feasible. You can't talk about African *auteurism* without the Egyptian Shadi Abdel-Salam's *Night of Counting the Years* in 1970 because before it, most African audiences simply couldn't believe that Africans (with the exception of Sembene) could make films that expressed their own imagination. When *Night of Counting the Years* was showing at festivals it was a major revelation for lots of people. It was like when people first saw Kurosawa's *Rashomon* or Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*. I didn't watch it as an African, I watched it as part of a European cinema-going audience on a late night where I had gone because I had been told that this was a film by an *auteur*. I had an obsession with that kind of *auteur* cinema because you were always guaranteed a fairly transparent set of consistent preoccupations. You didn't think they were what some studio wanted to put out to make money. So you can ascribe to it a certain kind of honesty – which I'm sure was completely artificial, but when you were 18 or 19, it had a really powerful impact. You thought, here is Hollywood Cinema and it is just made by people who care about money, not films – and there is this other cinema made by people who don't really care about money, they just care about films. So within those fairly unrealistic set of expectations, an Egyptian film about what a contemporary, alienated Egyptian subject does with his or her history

seemed like a major revelation to me. I admired it enormously.

JE: Does the category 'African Cinema' work in the Diaspora context, of Europe, North America and the Caribbean?

JA: I think there is the myth of African Cinema and there is the reality of it. The myth is that it is made largely by people who live and work in Africa – but my sense of it is that the thing is much more fluid than that. Some of the major film makers are in permanent exile: Haile Gerima, Med Hondo and a whole range of younger ones who simply can't work in their own countries because there is no money to make films. You have people who sponsor it and keep it going, who are not born in Africa but are of African descent. You have people like myself who are also of African descent, but who have not been brought up in that environment and are still trying to build a rapport or find a relationship with Africa through films. So my relationship with it is not philosophical or abstract. African Cinema is a film world in search of both a constituency and a community, and it realises that it is potentially a borderless cinema. Once *Ceddo* in the 70s had used the voice of Mahalia Jackson to underscore the capture and branding of a group of slaves, the minute it used a gospel number to do that, it made a certain conceptual leap that couldn't be closed: that profound connection that there are Africans of African descent

who are elsewhere than Africa. In *Ceddo*, we discovered the Diaspora. *Ceddo* literally created that Diaspora which people like me belatedly take for granted, because it required a certain leap of the imagination.

There were two other films: *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* by Pasolini and Lindsay Anderson's *If...* which both used the *Missa Luba* for exactly the same reasons: to allude to another world. But that world remains closed to those films, you didn't get the sense that anything was being added. Whereas when Sembene used Gospel music in *Xala*, it made a kind of connection which was more than an abstract or aesthetic one. It opened a cultural and conceptual door for thinking about Africans, the implications of which we are still trying to work through. We shouldn't try to be too prescriptive about who and what belongs to and doesn't belong to African Cinema. I have never had a problem in assuming that the Black British Film Community has a lot to offer to and a lot to gain from a relationship with African Cinema. I don't see them as mutually exclusive because the notion of Diaspora as I understand it isn't simply alluding to some direct mystical bond with Africa. Not everybody who says they are interested in Africa needs to be a romantic mystic. African Cinema itself is capable of invoking this Diaspora community, and that is what I like about it, and why I keep going back to *Ceddo*. That

film invoked it for me – and I accept its invocation: that you can have creative, cultural and poetic connections between people of different parts of the world, because there are things that they share. That's enough for me.

JE: Would you know of Sarah Maldoror and Raoul Peck in this context?

JA: Yes. That's the fifth group that I haven't included in my list above: film-makers 'from the Diaspora' who also have a quite direct relationship with African Cinema. To some extent what we understand as African Cinema would literally not exist without Sarah Maldoror's direct intervention and participation as a film-maker with her 1972 French film *Sambizanga*. It is also clearly the case that this cinema wouldn't exist now without some very direct input from film-makers who are of African descent but are not from the continent, because they keep that cinema going now. The Haitian director Raoul Peck's 1992 *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet* rekindled an interest in a certain kind of African film making which very few people in Africa are interested in. In a way it took the outsiders – myself with *Testament*, Raoul, the Guinea film-maker David Achkar – to begin this dialogue about the importance of memory. Those films have played a decisive kind of role in re-orienting an audience's assumption and expectation of what constitutes African Cinema: films about pariahs, about people who don't quite belong. Lots of people make films in Africa about people who don't quite belong, but they don't make them in quite the same way. Idrissa Ouedraogo's *Yaaba* is about such a figure, but the kind of impossible yearning that you get in *Lumumba*, where in the end the camera just roams the streets of Europe with a voice droning on and on – this search which cannot have a resolution because it's a search for the impossible – that sense would not come from Ouedraogo. To take this even further, film-makers in the UK like Menelik Shabazz or Imruh Bakari play precisely the kind of role that Raoul and Sarah play in France. Because their dialogue with African Cinema is not just as outsiders, they want to do it from the inside. They don't want to defer to some myth of the inside, they want their role within – to change somehow what it means to be an African. These are not people who are taking begging bowls to African Cinema to say, "Tell us what African Cinema is." They want to play an active role in defining and re-defining what African Cinema could be. The tragedy is that, in this country, they don't get the chance and the money to make those films – but there is no reason why Imruh's insight into what African Cinema is, shouldn't be as seminal as Raoul Peck's *Lumumba*; he is as determined to play that role in African Cinema as (I dare say) Raoul is. We are talking about people who understand three cultures intimately; they understand African culture because they've been there, they've lived there and they've worked there. They also know Europe very well and they know the Caribbean, and there is this desire to make some kind of 'fritter' which they know would be wholly and absolutely of all three places. They are not reducible to any of them, and I think that's fine. John Akomfrah, Haile Gerima and Ousmane Sembene are all panellists in the 'Africa and the History of Cinematic Ideas' Conference at the NFT, 9-10 September



Shadi Abdel-Salam's 'Night of Counting the Years': an Egyptian film of seminal importance for African Cinema, shown at festivals around the world, left

Seeing with the heart

My main motivation to become a film-maker was a terrible Iranian film by Fradj Cehaderi, called *Barzakhiha* (which translates roughly as *People from Hell* or *The Doomed*). It was a post-revolutionary film about a group of murderers and thieves who escape from prison, only to find that Iraq has invaded Iran. The group have nothing in common, but they find themselves united in the face of the Iraqi enemy and motivated to fight together against him. It was a cheap action film, which combined war propaganda with the worst kind of B-movie police story plot; and a very hypocritical, opportunistic film because Cehaderi had made horrible, commercial, very exploitative films before the Revolution. Then after the Revolution, he used this patriotic film as a means to break back into the world of Iranian cinema. I mention this to show that ugly, terrible things can sometimes have a positive effect, in that they bring out something good and creative within you.

But a good film that made a great impression on me was Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire*. I was so overwhelmed that I had pain all over my body after seeing it. No other film ever had that effect on me. It affected me so deeply that it gave me hope that cinema could really be a kind of Paradise.

As a child my grandmother looked after me. She was very traditional and religious. She didn't like cinema and she believed that whoever went to the movies would go to hell. Naturally, because of her influence, I was reluctant to go to the cinema. But to be perfectly honest, a lot of the Iranian cinema at that time was quite hellish anyway. When I first saw *Wings of Desire*, I wished that my grandmother were still alive so that I could show her that not all movies take you to hell, but that there are some that can take you to Paradise – not the Paradise after death but the Paradise within this life.

In Iranian philosophy, human beings formerly lived in Paradise; but they committed the original sin and were condemned to live on Earth. In *Wings of Desire*, this whole idea was turned around. The angel, by falling in love, chooses to become a human being. The traditional Iranian idea is that an angel comes to earth because he has committed a sin, or done something wrong. This film was saying that the ultimate goal for an angel was to become a human being. In most religions, there is a belief that when human beings reach the state of ultimate enlightenment, they can become angels. But here the message is that human beings can actually achieve a state that is higher than the angels, by falling in love.

The main dream of human beings – all film-makers, all artists – is to become immortal. An artist or a film-maker creates a work of art; he knows that when he dies his work will remain. Others have children to continue living through them. We are afraid of death because it disrupts the flow of life. In this film the angel, who is immortal, prefers to be mortal. His choosing love over immortality shows that love is the most important thing: that a human being becomes immortal when he's full of love. Wenders is also saying that to be immortal,

In Iranian culture, angels are tough bodyguards, so the kindly angels of Wenders' 'Wings of Desire' came as a surprise to the Iranian film-maker Mohsan Makhmalbaf, whose films include 'Salam Cinéma' and 'Once Upon a Time, the Movies...'

by being an angel, is merely to endure the passage and the length of time. The angel in the film chooses love because he finds immortality within love, not within time. A human being reaches immortality through love, not by simply being able to exist within time.

I particularly enjoyed the way the angels were portrayed. In my culture, the angel is a kind of bodyguard, even a KGB agent, always trying to check up on us, to monitor our activities. He is an authoritarian figure. But in *Wings of Desire*, there was more a sense of the guardian angel who protects us and helps us to go through hardships – not the cop angel who spies on us.

In most religions, the main idea is the opposition/contradiction between earthly life and Paradise. In order to guarantee a happy afterlife, you have to be good here on earth. But in *Wings of Desire*, it was celestial intervention – through the angels – that helped to bring happiness on earth.

One of the simplest technical devices in the film – yet powerful – is the use of black and white to express the angelic dimension, and colour for the human. I also loved the scene when the angel decided to sell his wings to the antique dealer, and he only gets a bit of money – not very much at all. The idea that he preferred to get rid of his wings to hanging on to them intrigued me. And the wings being metallic or iron – very heavy and inflexible, not at all flesh and blood – was interesting too. In all religions, angels are described as being softer and smoother than human beings. In this film we see them more rigid and inflexible than humans, and that they don't see life in colour, only in black and white. They are operating on a more basic, limited level of experience than humans. Their interest in both the beautiful woman and the old man in the library is significant as well. It shows that their love was without prejudice in terms of age or sex or beauty. Both the old man and the young woman felt lonely and were in need of angelic attention.

The main feeling I got from the circus

scene was the sense of the woman being suspended in mid-air, not really knowing where to go, a bit lost. I felt this was like the human condition – we are all floating until we find love. Love brings us to earth: it gives us gravity, grounds us. The beautiful thing is that both the angel and the circus performer are in a similar situation. The angel comes from above, trying to put his feet on the earth, and also the woman comes down from her suspension. Love frees them both from this feeling of suspension – it gives them direction and purpose.

Considering the kind of gratuitous violence promoted in most cinema, I found *Wings of Desire* refreshing because, by showing the possibility that we were once all angels, a message of peace emerges. Why should humans fight together if they were once all in an angelic state? The film promotes friendship between human beings and angels, and brotherhood between men. If an American regarded a Vietnamese as an angel come to earth, how could he possibly kill him? Why should we all get along? Because we all used to be angels and we all used to be in love. If we believe this, or in our potential to fall in love, then it's hard for us to hate or kill each other.

Compared to Wenders' previous films, such as *Paris, Texas* – which offers no solution to life's problems, which says in fact what Antonioni has said before – *Wings of Desire* offers a way, a hope, of overcoming these problems. After watching *Paris, Texas*, or Antonioni, you feel suicidal. But after watching *Wings of Desire*, you feel a sense of renewal, of motivation to get out there and really start living. Some poets waste their words, and some film-makers waste their equipment and facilities, as well as the audience's time, by giving them meaningless cinema that is mere entertainment. I believe what Kurosawa said that we have to see films with our heart. I think that every film should bring something new and fresh into your life. I think that should be the main goal of cinema.

Mohsan Makhmalbaf talked to Hadani Ditmars



Someone to watch over me: 'Wings of Desire'

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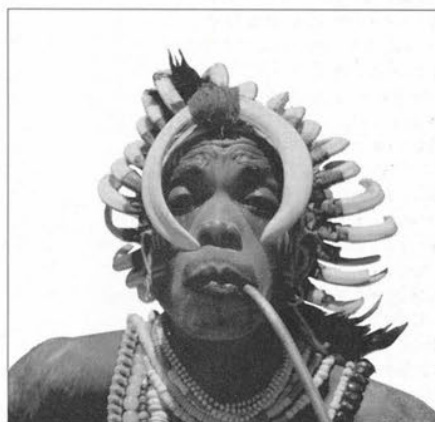
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REVIEWS

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Apollo 13

USA 1995

Director: Ron Howard

Certificate

PG

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

Imagine Entertainment

Executive Producer

Todd Halliwell

Producer

Brian Grazer

Associate Producers

Aldric La'Auli Porter

Michael Bostick

Louisa Velis

Production Associate

Julie Donatt

Production Supervisor

Michelle Weinberg

Production Co-ordinators

Lisa J. Watters

Kelly L'Estrange

KC-135 Weightless

Unit:

Virginia Diaz

Brooke R. MacDonald

Cape Canaveral Unit:

Wendy Haas-Hammond

Unit Production Manager

Carl Clifford

Location Manager

Ned R. Shapiro

2nd Unit Director

Todd Halliwell

Assistant Directors

Aldric La'Auli Porter

Jane Paul

William Connor

2nd Unit:

Bruce G. Moriarty

Susan Pickett

Script Supervisors

Eva Z. Cabrera

2nd Unit:

Janna Stern

Casting

Jane Jenkins

Janet Hirshenson

Associate:

Susanna Griffith

Voice:

Lynne Redding

Loop Du Jour

Screenplay

William Broyles

JR. & Al Reinert

Based on the book

Lost Moon by Jim Lovell,

Jeffrey Kluger

Director of Photography

Dean Cundey

KC-135 Weightless

Unit:

David Nowell

Camera Operators

Raymond Stella

Casey Hotchkiss

KC-135 Weightless

Unit:

Josh Bleibtreu

MC Camera Operator

Michael Karp

Computer Display

Supervisor

John Monsour

Special Visual Effects

Digital Domain

Supervisor:

Robert Legato

Visual Effects

Producer:

Jenny Fulle

Line Producer:

Cari Thomas

Director of

Photography:

Erik Nash

Supervising Editor:

Allen Cappuccilli

Editor:

Debra Wolff

Digital Compositing

Supervisors

Michael Kanfer

Price Pethel

Lead Digital Compositors

Mark O. Forker

Steven J. Scott

Adam Stark

Gary L. Walker II

Digital Effects

Supervisors:

Karen E. Goulekas

Mark A. Lasoff

John McLaughlin

Producers:

Amy Jupiter

Mark Lohff

Art Director:

Kevin Mack

Additional Photography

Robert Legato

Animation Rephotography

Chris Dawson

Supervising Digital Artists

Dennis M. Blakey

Judith Crow

Robert Small

Neville Spiteri

Digital Matte Artist

Martha Snow Mack

Scanning/Recording

Supervisor:

Jeffrey Kalmus

Manager:

Joseph Goldstone

CG Co-ordinators

Lisa Harriman

Anderson

Franco Pietrantonio

Software Developers

Hank Driskill

Jake Klauth

Jay Sloat

Bill Spitzak

Editors

Mike Hill

Dan Hanley

Production Designer

Michael Corenblieth

Art Directors

David J. Bomba

Bruce Alan Miller

Set Design

Joseph A. Hodges

Lori Rowbotham

Set Decorator

Merideth Boswell

Storyboard Artists

Eric Ramsey

Richard F. Delgado

Special Effects Co-ordinator

Matt Sweeney

Model Supervisor

Patrick McClung

Model Crew Chief

Leslie Ekker

Pyrotechnics Supervisor

Joe Viskocil

Costume Design

Rita Ryack

Associate:

Daniel Orlandi

Costume Supervisor

Dan Bronson

Key Make-up

Daniel Striepeke

Key Hairstylist

Kathryn L. Blondell

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

Music

James Horner

Music Performed by

Vocal:

Annie Lennox

Orchestrations

Steve Branson

James Horner

Supervising Music Editor

Jim Hendriksen

Music Editor

Thomas Drescher

Songs/Music Extracts

"Waiting" by Carlos

Santana, David Brown,

Gregg Rolie, Mike

Shrieve, Jose Areas,

Mike Carabello,

performed by Santana;

"Night Train" by

Jimmy Forrest, Lewis

C. Simpkins, Oscar

Washington,

performed by James

Brown; "Beyond the

Sea" by Charles Trenet,

Jack Lawrence,

performed by Bobby

Darin; "Groovin'"

by Felix Cavaliere,

Eddie Brigati,

performed by The

Rascals; "Somebody

To Love" by Grace Slick,

performed by Jefferson

Airplane; "I Can See

For Miles" by Peter

Townshend, performed

by The Who; "Magic

Carpet Ride" by John

Kay, Rushton Moreve,

performed by

Steppenwolf; "Purple

Haze" by Jimi Hendrix,

performed by The Jimi

Hendrix Experience;

"Spirit In The Sky"

by and performed by

Norman Greenbaum;

"Lemon Tree" by Will

Holt, performed by

Trini Lopez; "Honky

Tonkin" by and

performed by Hank

Williams; "Blue Moon"

by Richard Rodgers,

Lorenz Hart, performed

by The Mavericks

Supervising Dialogue Editor

Anthony (Chic)

Ciccolini III

Dialogue Editors

Lou Cerborino

Bitty O'Sullivan-Smith

Thomas A. Gullino

Dan Sable

Supervising ADR Editor

Lisa J. Levine

Supervising Foley Editor

Judee Flick

ADR Editors

Stuart Stanley

Harry Peck Bolles

Foley Editors

Matthew Beville

Frank Smathers

Sound Mixers

David Macmillan

2nd Unit:

Geoff Patterson

John 'Sol' Sutton

ADR Mixers

LA:

Dean Drabin

New York:

Paul Zydel

Foley Mixer

David Job

Music Scoring Mixer

Shawn Murphy

Sound Recordist

Bob Olari

ADR Recordists

LA:

Ann Hadsell

New York:

Doug Murray

Foley Recordist

Don Givens

Sound Effects Recordists

Ezra Dweck

Adam Jenkins

Sound Re-recording Mixers

Rick Dior

Scott Millan

Bob Chefalas

Steve Pederson

Ezra Dweck

Supervising Sound

Effects Editor

Stephen Hunter Flick

Sound Effects Editors

Donald Stewart Flick

Dean Beville

Eric Lindemann

Patricio Libenson

Richard L. Anderson

Warren Hamilton Jr

Elliott Koretz

Special Sound Effects

John Pospisil

Donald Stewart Flick



Men with a mission: Bill Paxton, Tom Hanks

As the film *Apollo 13* launches, a voice-over (which we swiftly realise belongs to Tom Hanks as Jim Lovell) explains the NASA programme, stating that it was inspired by JFK and cold war politics. Apart from these brief comments, and a later mention that the Beatles have just broken up, global history is eschewed while the film covers the six-day story of three men who were nearly lost in space: James Lovell, Fred Haise and Jack Swigert. One reason why the *Apollo* mission was such a government priority was as a distraction from the Vietnam war. This political context is conspicuously disregarded here. Instead, director Ron Howard shows us a bright and cheerful America, blooming with vibrant flower prints and grooving to Jimi Hendrix and James Brown. Only the comment about the Beatles indicates that the 60s dream is about to turn sour. Dubbed a 'successful failure', *Apollo 13* smoothed over cracks evident in the space programme by becoming a major story – a moment of triumph – just when the media's interest was beginning to flag.

A more astute film-maker might have teased out the ironies and contradictions of an event that, in retrospect, seems to signal the downbeat and fearful mood of the new decade. There is an eerie glimmer of this when the crew's battery-depleted tape recorder floats weightlessly about blaring a run-down version of 'Blue Moon', but otherwise the film fails to convey a real sense of terror. Indeed, it has about as much atmosphere as the moon itself. Nor is it improved by James Horner's soundtrack, which is like some space sampler wavering between allusions to the *Aliens* score (which Horner also composed) and the angelic chorus schmaltz of *E.T.* There is little sense of the claustrophobia and dramatic tension needed to render the incident as an adventure story.

Instead, Ron Howard tells a story of courage in which the crew and Mission Control pull together to work the problem through (much in the way that the firemen do in Howard's *Backdraft* or the family members in his *Parenthood*). No doubt science buffs will be happy that the audience are kept abreast of the technical side of the operation in the same way that *ER* keeps its medical

details straight. Concentrate hard and one might even learn how to make a carbon dioxide extractor out of bits of tubing and odd socks.

Meanwhile, the characters have no time for mutiny or questioning the wisdom of superior officers back at the base. Instead, we are shown a moment in which the establishment gets it right. Unlike Philip Kaufman's perceptive study of the Mercury Project in *The Right Stuff*, Howard's film does not care to comment that the *Apollo* spacemen were as good as specimens in a rather risky experiment run by balding boffins, given things to do that could just as easily be done by remote control – a fact which would have given more dramatic weight to the accident that forced the astronauts to truly take some control. Howard may have cast Ed Harris, who played John Glenn in the Kaufman film, to play Mission Control leader Gene Kranz, but otherwise *Apollo 13* hardly measures up to the earlier film's dazzling adaptation of Tom Wolfe's wry critique.

Ultimately, there is something very chipper about *Apollo 13*, as if it wants to be a homage to the all-American spirit – the real Right Stuff. Cut-aways to Lovell's teenage son stoically watching the news reports with his classmates at a military academy seem to symbolise this. He is undoubtedly his father's son, for Lovell, along with Haise and Swigert, are brave men with few visible flaws. Tensions might run high in the capsule as Haise lashes out at Swigert and blames him for their predicament, but they are swiftly abated with a few calm words from Lovell. While Lovell's ambitions of becoming one of the few to walk on the moon are dashed, in the end he pulls off a feat more remarkable. Such a clean-cut crew makes for bland heroes. It is a problem endemic to films based on true life events which are honoured rather than interrogated. This is no *Quiz Show*. Only the skirt-chasing Swigert has any roguish appeal – particularly with Kevin Bacon in the role, who proved to be such a mean villain in *The River Wild*. Meanwhile, Hanks' Lovell is as solid, and as about as intriguing, as a chunk of moon rock. But his is a performance in keeping with *Apollo 13*, which makes all the right moves but lacks inspiration.

Lizzie Francke

The Bait (L'Appât)

France 1995

Director: Bertrand Tavernier

Certificate

18

Distributor

Artificial Eye/Mayfair
Production Company
A Hachette Première
and Cie/Little Bear
Productions/France 2
Cinéma/M6 films

With the participation
of Canal +

Producers

René Cleitman
Frédéric Bourboulon
Production Director

Yvon Crenn

Unit Production Manager

Catherine Pierrat

Location Manager

Frédéric Bersani

Assistant Directors

Emmanuel Finkiel

Julie Bertuccelli

Continuity

Zoë Zurstrassen

Screenplay

Colo Tavernier O'Hagan

Bertrand Tavernier

Based on the book by

Morgan Sportès

Director of Photography

Alain Choquart

Editor

Luce Grunenwaldt

Production Designer

Emile Ghigo

Set Design

Jean-François Corneille

Costume Design

Marpessa Djan

Wardrobe Supervisor

Monique Dury-Tholy

Make-up

Agnès Tassel

Music

Philippe Haim

Music Director

Mario Klemens

Music Performed By

Prague Philharmonic

Music Consultant

Philippe Cohen-Solal

Songs/Music Extracts

"Tukka Yoot's Riddim"

by D. Covay, S. Cropper,

M. Simpson, R. Taylor,

G. Wilkinson,

performed by Us 3;

"Love Fifteen" by Serge

Gainsbourg, performed

by Jane Birkin;

"Hallelujah" by

Saunders, MacCoy,

Munel, performed

by Inner City; "Joy"

by Romeo, Mowat,

performed by Soul II

Soul; "Heaven Help"

by Gerry de Veaux,

Terry Britton,

performed by Lenny

Kravitz; "Don't Jones

Me" by Cullinan,

Dilworth, performed

by The Faith Healers;

"Kiss That Frog"

by and performed by

Peter Gabriel; "A Girl

Like You" by and

performed by Edwyn

Collins; "Il me dit que

je suis belle" by S.

Brewski, performed

by Patricia Kaas;

"Super Electric"

by Gane, Sadler,

performed by

Stereolab; "Home"

by James Osterberg,

performed by Iggy

Pop; "Rio Grande"

by C. Molne,

P. Papadiamandis,

performed by

Eddy Mitchell

Sound

Michel Desrois

Gérard Lamps

Sound Editor

Khadicha Bariha-

Simsolo

Music Recordist

Didier Lize

Sound Effects

Jean-Pierre Lelong

Film Extracts

Scarface (1983)

Tandem (1987)

Cast

Marie Gillain

Nathalie

Olivier Sitruk

Eric

Bruno Putzulu

Bruno

Richard Berry

Alain

Philippe Duclos

Antoine

Marie Ravel

Karine

Clotilde Courau

Patricia

Jean-Louis Richard

Restaurant Owner

Christophe Odent

Laurent

Jean-Paul Comart

Michel

Philippe Helies

Pierre

Jacky Mercessian

M. Tapiro

(Nathalie's boss)

Alain Sarde

Philippe

Daniel Russo

Jean-Pierre

Philippe Torreton

Head of Crime

François Berleand

Inspector Durieux

François Levantal

Thierry Gimenez

Cops

Isabelle Sadoyan

Eric's Grandmother

Laurent Arnal

Vincent

Jeanne Coupil

Nathalie's Mother

Fulvio Trigu

Barman in Restaurant

Carole Pommès

Claire Vidoni

Female Cops

Bobby Pacha

Bobby

Arnaud Churin

Banlieusard

Myriam Balassiano

Nathalie's Sister

Sandrine Desio

Serveuse Roule

Laurent Klug

Boy in Cafe

Thierry Beccaro

Game Show Host

10,510 feet

116 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Subtitles

Nathalie is 18 and works in Paris as a model and shop-assistant, sharing a flat with Eric, her unemployed boyfriend, and Bruno, his dim-witted pal. In the evenings, she chats

up affluent-looking men, collecting their business cards for her address book. The boys dream of moving to the States and setting up in the clothes business. To subsidise this dream they plan a series of robberies using Nathalie to lure men whose cards she has collected back to their apartments where she can let the boys in.

The trio bungle the first three robbery attempts. When the next target, Antoine, a lawyer and writer, insists that he keeps no money in the flat, the boys torture and kill him. With another target, Alain, the boys are initially foiled by a locking device but they gain access on a second visit. Again the victim insists there is little of value in the flat but Eric suspects him of having slept with Nathalie the first time and so Alain too is tortured and killed. The trio ransack a pile of Christmas gifts. Nathalie leaves the apartment wearing a Star of David ripped from around Alain's neck.

Nathalie and Eric argue and she becomes increasingly uneasy with the way their plan is progressing. The police call in at her work and then take her to the station for questioning. They show her images of the victims. When it is explained to her that Alain was repeatedly stabbed with a blunt letter opener, she reveals the identity of the killers. She asks the chief inspector if she will be released in time for Christmas.

The *Bait* sees Bertrand Tavernier returning from *D'Artagnan's Daughter* to the street-level realism of *L.627*, a film whose surefootedness derives from its semi-documentary emphasis on the everyday gestures and operational dilemmas of its drug squad flics. In *The Bait*, however, the focus is on adolescent criminals and the film is closely modelled on a *cause célèbre* series of killings that took place in France in 1984 involving a girl who persuaded several wealthy Parisians to take her back to their apartments where they would be jumped by her two male accomplices and eventually murdered. Tavernier retains the characters and facts of the case, resituating them in present-day Paris to provide a snapshot of current metropolitan criminality.

The *Bait* partakes in today's obsession with violent crime in a number of ways. Tavernier's teenagers are identikit victims of modern consumer society, and when it comes to assigning symptomatic reasons for their casual criminality it's a matter of rounding up the usual suspects. American cinema, video culture and game shows are proposed as perpetuating a culture of celebrity and hyper-acquisitive capitalism. However, Tavernier's take on these hardly qualifies as an analysis, condemning a soulless, international (read American) visual culture for having corrupted youth is more of a knee-jerk reflex of symptomatic moralism.

It is significant that the dream for which these young would-be entrepreneurs are prepared to kill is that of moving to the US and setting up in the rag trade. In a director's statement, ►



On the hook: Marie Ravel, Marie Gillain

◀ Tavernier accurately asserts that America still exercises a strong hold on the imagination of French youth. Yet – perhaps typically for a vaguely left-wing Frenchman of a certain age – the fascination that he is now castigating as pernicious is the same one that he himself explores in his *Trente Ans de cinéma américain* which he wrote as a young critic. It is not that the sociologist in Tavernier overwhelms the cinéaste, it's more that the film's moralism dominates his imagination. This is indicated by his choice of easy targets and by his pinpointing – as an index of despair – a young female character as archetypal of current criminality.

The Bait is of a piece with such recent films as *Fun* and *Heavenly Creatures* in taking William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* idea of childhood as a receptacle for a primal kind of evil, and relocating it within a specific social arena and giving it a 90s gender-spin. Each of these films is a kind of *Young Ladies of the Flies*, answering to specific fears of the moment. In *The Bait*, the answers are unsatisfactory and tediously moralistic, the only suggested panacea being a barely-explored notion of community suggested by the victim Alain's assertion of his shared Jewishness with the young thug Eric. However, in its realism and to the extent that it calls upon a particularly French vein of *intimiste* drama, *The Bait* might appear to be offering itself as an antidote to the 'irresponsible images' that are presented here as both a cause and a symptom of an irresponsible society. Yet this kind of realism is hardly a domestically popular cinematic form, a fact acknowledged by Tavernier through the boys' addiction to De Palma's *Scarface* and their comment in the local video store that a certain film is not worth the effort: "C'est Français, c'est nase" ("It's French, it's not worth it").

Tavernier's exhausted political puritanism is also evident in the film's treatment of Nathalie, the so-called bait for the gang's victims. Although Marie Gillain's performance is excellent – coltish and of-the-moment – there's a sense that Tavernier sees Nathalie as a blank on which to project all manner of social misgivings. Thus the film serves her up as the butt of its own censorious guilt and fears. It becomes clear why *L.627* worked, or at least maintained a level of consistency and integrity of tone: the director was alongside the police not only physically but also, one suspects, in spirit.

Chris Darke

Blue Juice

United Kingdom 1995

Director: Peter Salmi

Certificate

15

Distributor

Film Four Distribution

Production Companies

Film Four

International/Pandora

Cinema present

A Skreba Film

Producers

Simon Relp

Peter Salmi

Production Co-ordinators

Deryn Stafford

2nd Unit:

Hilary Benson

Production Manager

Anita Overland

Location Managers

Fran Robertson

Lanzarote:

Rosa Romero

Post-production Supervisor

Jane Headland

2nd Unit Director

Tim Veglio

Assistant Directors

David Daniels

Stephen Woolfenden

Toby Coke

Script Supervisor

Julia Richards

Casting

Abi Cohen

Screenplay

Peter Salmi

Carl Prechezer

Based on an original idea by

Peter Salmi

Carl Prechezer

Tim Veglio

Director of Photography

Richard Greatrex

2nd Unit Director

of Photography

James Welland

Water Camera

Lanzarote:

Mark Thompson

Cornwall:

Mark Silk

Editor

Michael Ellis

Production Designer

Mark Tildesley

Art Director

Tristan Peatfield

Costume Design

Linda Alderson

Make-up

Kirstin Weguelin

Sammy Serjeant

Hair

Kirstin Weguelin

Titles

Mike Dempsey

Music

Simon Davison

Songs/Music Extracts

"Movin' On Up" by

Gillespie, Young, Innes,

performed by Edwin

Starr; "The Price of

Pain" by Davison,

Salmi, Prechezer, Starr,

performed by Edwin

Starr; "Freedom Bug"

by Gem, performed

by Heavy Stereo; "Get

It On" by Marc Bolan,

performed by T-Rex;

"Leave Them All

Behind" by Queralt,

Gardener, Bell, Colbert,

performed by Ride;

"Half The Man" by Kay,

Smith, performed

by Jamiroquai; "Duel",

by Franklin, Hartridge,

Hindmarsh, performed

by Swervedriver;

"Lonely For You Baby"

by Dees, Crump,

performed by Sam

Dees; "I Need

Something Stronger"

by Noko, Gray, Gray,

performed by Apollo

440; "You're The

Dream" by Burt

Bacharach, Hal David,

performed by Roscoe

Shelton; "You're The

One" by Davison,

Salmi, Prechezer,

performed by Gillian

Wisdom

Choreographer

Clive Clark

Sound Design

Danny Hambrook

Dialogue Editor

Ian Wilson

Foley Editor

Michael Redfern

Dubbing Mixer

Paul Hamblin

Foley Artists

Jack Stew

Dianne Greaves

Surfing Consultants

Rob Small

Steve England

Surfing Advisor

Lanzarote:

Pedro Urrestarazu

Northern Soul Advisor

Lee Vowles

Stunt Co-ordinators

Rod Woodruff

Glenn Marks

Cast

Sean Pertwee

JC

Catherine Zeta Jones

Chloe

Steven Mackintosh

Josh Tambini

Ewan McGregor

Dean Raymond

Peter Gunn

Terry Colcott

Heathcote Williams

Shaper

Colette Brown

Junior

Michelle Chadwick

Sarah

Keith Allen

Mike

Robin Soans

Young Bob

Jenny Agutter

Guinvere/Mary Fenton

Guy Leverton

Crab

Mark Frost

Moose

Paul Reynolds

Recording Engineer

Edwin Starr

Ossie Sands

Richard Moore

Smuggler FM's Dan

Raymond Adamson

Smuggler FM's Gordon

Russell De Rozario

Massive Bouncer

David Glover

Hotel Manager

George Glen

Hotel Receptionist

Shaughan Seymour

Auctioneer

Luke Foxley

Stroppy Kid

Astrid Weguelin

Baby

Paul Honor

Jeremy Kent

Jamie Pardoe

Chris Ryan

Essex Tyler

Andrea Wharry

Surfing Crew

8,848 feet

98 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

● JC is the hero of a Cornish surfing community, who once conquered a deadly surfing run called the Boneyard. He is approaching 30, with a permanent back injury, and yet he evades commitment to his girlfriend Chloe, who runs a small cafe, the Aquashack. When Chloe tells him she wants to buy the lease to the shack rather than go around the world with him, JC acts disdainful.

Old friends from London arrive: Josh, a former Northern Soul fan and maker of cash-in techno records and Dean, an ineffectual drug dealer and wannabe tabloid newspaperman. They have kidnapped corpulent publican homebody Terry for a last blast of surfing freedom before his imminent marriage. Terry stops trying to escape when Dean slips him some Ecstasy. Josh meets Junior, a female soul DJ who invites him to a church hall dance later that evening. Chloe and JC are reconciled after she hears him refusing to surf the Boneyard again. However, after Dean is beaten up for selling bad drugs, he begs JC to surf it, as the story will get him a newspaper job. JC reluctantly agrees. At Junior's dance, Josh finds his loss of principles subject to interrogation by die-hard Northern Soul fans.

Chloe finds out about JC's surfing plans and storms off. JC decides to sell his round the world tickets to Terry so Chloe can have the money for the shack auction, and then refuses to surf the Boneyard. Dean attempts the perilous feat and, in effecting a heroic rescue, JC misses the auction. The surfers get together to do up a new shack for Chloe. Later, she and JC have a child, Dean is happily sanding surfboards, Terry and his wife are living a life of global adventure, and Josh has regained his self-respect by making records with Junior's soul singer dad.

● More *Little Thursday* than *Big Wednesday*, Carl Prechezer and Peter Salmi's likeably dippy and occasionally downright bizarre saga of personal responsibility and Cornish youth culture succeeds in making a virtue out of its inconsistencies. *Blue Juice*'s climactic surfing scene had to be filmed in Lanzarote, so that even though there is meant to be a storm and the camera keeps cutting valiantly back to a tempest-lashed headland, the waves themselves are in bright sunlight. With such strategies, *Blue Juice* avoids that drained-of-colour-at-the-laundrette look which

dogs so many British films. It is bright, the pace is bouncy and the cultural terrain – raves, exploitation techno and ecstasy jokes – is, if not exactly bang up-to-date, at least still fairly fresh in the memory. *Blue Juice* breaks with surfing movie tradition by extending more sympathy to Catherine Zeta Jones' plucky, stay-at-home girlfriend character Chloe than to the foolish surfing male hero JC played by Sean Pertwee. The general feel of the film however (and this is not necessarily a bad thing) is almost startlingly old-fashioned. The echoes from Cliff Richard's early 60s entrepreneur cycle (*Summer Holiday*, *The Young Ones*) are so strong that there are moments when a red double decker bus seems to be hovering just inches out of shot.

As with their Screen One television film *Dirty something*, Salmi and Prechezer's script is not so much a story as a cat's cradle of cultural cross-references. Some of these – Keith Allen's tabloid villain by numbers, Jenny Agutter as an imaginary television costume drama heroine – are superfluous, especially as *Blue Juice* seems to be trying to make a coherent point. The film advocates a need to put energy back into culture as well as take it out. The absurd but entertaining techno-DJ-rediscovers-his-soul sub-plot can be interpreted in two different ways. Either as a backward looking admission of contemporary cultural inferiority, or as a bold rejection of Margaret Thatcher's infamous assertion that there is no such thing as society – a rejection backed up by Edwin Starr singing Primal Scream on the soundtrack.

Catherine Zeta Jones is no Annette Funicello, but she passes as Una Stubbs, and Sean Pertwee seems to enjoy the rare respite from being cast as a bargain basement Gary Oldman. The film's best acting though comes from one rung down the casting ladder, as Ewan McGregor and Steven Mackintosh do battle as hustler and DJ respectively. Their dialogue has more snap to it – "Lawyers are professionals, doctors are professionals, drug-dealers are not professionals" – and hints at the film's main underlying theme. For all its multiple happy-endings, *Blue Juice*'s final message is that the search for cultural validation and meaningful career development in post-industrial Britain is by no means an easy one.

Ben Thompson



Homebuddy: Catherine Zeta Jones

Braveheart

USA 1995

Director: Mel Gibson

Certificate

tbc
Distributor
 Twentieth Century Fox
Production Companies
 Twentieth Century Fox
 presents
 An Icon
 Productions/Ladd
 Company Production
Executive Producer
 Stephen McEveety
Producers
 Mel Gibson
 Alan Ladd Jnr
 Bruce Davey
Associate Producers
 Dean Lopata
 Elizabeth Robinson
Production Supervisor
 Ted Morley
Production Co-ordinators
 Fiona Traynor
 Marilyn Clarke
Production Manager
 Mary Alleguen
Unit Manager
 Kevin De La Noy
Location Managers
 Paul Shersby
 John McDonnell
 Dougal Cousins
 Grania O'Shannon
 Frances Byrne
2nd Unit Directors
 Mic Rodgers
 Matt Earl Beesley
Assistant Directors
 David Tomblin
 Patrick Kinney
 David Carrigan
 Paul Gray
 Kate Hazell
 2nd Unit:
 Kieron Phipps
 Trevor Puckle
 Peter Agnew
 Paul Barnes
 Charlotte Somers
Script Supervisors
 Sally Jones
 Additional:
 Anna Worley
Casting
 Patsy Pollock
 Associates:
 Julia Duff
 Jina Jay
 Leo Davis
Screenplay
 Randall Wallace
Director of Photography
 John Toll
Second Unit Directors of Photography
 Eddie Collins
 John Clothier
 Raymond Stella
Camera Operators
 John Clothier
 Klemens Becker
Steadicam Operator
 Klemens Becker
Digital Visual Effects
 R/Greenberg Associates
 West
Executive Producer:
 Tricia Ashford
Supervisor:
 Michael Fink
Producer:
 Steven T. Puri
Opticals
 Pacific Title
Editor
 Steven Rosenblum
Production Designer
 Tom Sanders
Supervising Art Director
 Dan Dorrance
Art Directors
 Nathan Crowley
 Ken Court
 John Lucas
 Ned McLoughlin
Set Supervisor
 Garbriel O'Brien

Set Decorator

Peter Howitt
Draughtsman
 Ken Ferguson
Production Illustrator
 Neil Ross
Storyboard Artist
 Dan Sweetman
Sculptures
 Eddie Butler
Special Effects Supervisor
 Nick Alder
Costume Design
 Charles Knode
Wardrobe Supervisor
 Rhona McGuirke
Make-up
 Chief:
 Peter Frampton
 2nd Unit Supervisor:
 Marie O'Sullivan
Hairstylists
 Chief:
 Paul Pattison
 2nd Unit Supervisor:
 Anne Dunne
Title Design
 Kyle Cooper
Titles
 R/Greenberg Associates
 West
Music
 James Horner
Music Performed by
 The London Symphony
 Orchestra
 Choirs of
 Westminster Abbey
 Kena/Whistle:
 Tony Hinnegan
 Keyboards:
 James Horner
 Uilleann Pipes:
 Eric Rigler
 Bodhrán
 Drum/Whistle:
 Mike Taylor
 Synth Programming:
 Ian Underwood
Orchestrations
 James Horner
Music Editor
 Jim Henrikson
Supervising Sound Editors
 Brian Simmons
Music Mixer/Recordist
 Shawn Murphy
Sound Re-recording Mixers
 Andy Nelson
 Scott Millan
 Anna Behlmer
Sound Effects Editors
 Peter Michael Sullivan
 Christopher Assells
 Randy Kelley
 Joseph Phillips
 Jeff Largent
 Jay B. Richardson
 Nigel Holland
 Scott Martin Gershini
 Chris Hogan
 Peter J. Lehman
 Craig Harris
 Dan Rich
 Richard Dwan Jnr
 Sarah Rothenberg
 Goldsmith
 Mark Lapointe
 Robert Heffernan
 Beth Bergeron
 Mary Ruth Smith
 Lou Kleinman
 Phil Hess
 Stuart Copley
 Hector Gik
 Kim Waugh
Foley Artists
 John Roesch
 Hilda Hodges

Stunt Co-ordinators

Simon Crane
 Mic Rodgers
Armourer/Gunsmith
 Simon Atherton
Swordmaster
 Nick Powell
Horse Master
 Tony Smart

Cast

Mel Gibson
 William Wallace
Sophie Marceau
 Princess Isabelle
Patrick McGoohan
 Longshanks, King
 Edward I
Catherine McCormack
 Murron
Brendan Gleeson
 Hamish
James Cosmo
 Campbell
David O'Hara
 Stephen
Alan Armstrong
 Mornay
Angus Macfadyen
 Robert the Bruce
Ian Bannen
 Leper
Peter Hanly
 Prince Edward
James Robinson
 Young William
Sean Lawlor
 Malcolm Wallace
Sandy Nelson
 John Wallace
Sean McInley
 MacClannough
Alan Tall
 Elder Stewart
Andrew Weir
 Young Hamish
Gerda Stevenson
 Mother MacClannough
Ralph Riach
 Robert Paterson
 Priests
Mhairi Calvey
 Young Murron
Brian Cox
 Argyll Wallace
Stephen Billington
 Phillip
Barry McGuire
 King's Advisor
John Kavanagh
 Craig
Tommy Flanagan
 Morrison
Julie Austin
 Mrs Morrison
Alex Norton
 Bride's Father
Joanne Bett
 Toothless Girl

Rupert Vansittart

Lord Bottoms
Michael Byrne
 Smythe
Malcolm Tierney
 Magistrate
William Masson
 Corporal
Dean Lopata
 Madbaker/Flagman
Tam White
 MacGregor
Donal Gibson
 Stewart
Jeanne Marine
 Nicolette
Martin Dunne
 Lord Doccroft
Fred Chiverton
 Leper's Caretaker
Jimmy Chisholm
 Faudron
David O'Hara
 Stephen
John Murtagh
 Lochlan
David McKay
 Young Soldier
Peter Mulvan
 Veteran
Martin Murphy
 Lord Talmadge
Gerard McSorley
 Cheltham
Bernard Horsfall
 Balliol
Richard Leaf
 Governor of York
Daniel Coli
 York Captain
Niall O'Brien
 English General
Liam Carney
 Sean
Bill Murdoch
 Villager
Phil Kelly
 Farmer
Martin Dempsey
 Jimmy Keogh
 Drinkers
Joe Savino
 Chief Assassin
David Gant
 Royal Magistrate
Mal Whyte
 Jailor
Paul Tucker
 English Commander

tbc
 the
 minutes

Dolby stereo
 In colour
 Rank Film
 Prints by
 DeLuxe
 Anamorphic

warns him of Edward's treachery. The Scots nobles, among them Robert the Bruce, pledge support, but at the battle of Falkirk they quit the field with their cavalry, leaving Wallace's infantry exposed. Wallace is aghast to find the Bruce riding in the ranks of the English. However, the Bruce is a reluctant English ally and helps Wallace to escape. Once more Edward sends Isabelle to treat with Wallace and this time they become lovers. Wallace wreaks vengeance on many of those Scots nobles who fled the field at Falkirk but he is betrayed, taken to London and, despite the intercession of Isabelle, brutally executed.

Some years later the Bruce, having finally come out against the English, invokes Wallace's name on the field of Bannockburn and proceeds to the victory which will establish the independence of Scotland.

1995 is being widely canvassed as Scotland's cinematic *annus mirabilis*. Two home-nurtured projects, *Shallow Grave* and *Rob Roy* have been critical and commercial successes and if, at the last moment, *Braveheart* was lured from Scotland to the Republic of Ireland by tax concessions and the promise of the Irish Army as extras, it nevertheless is seen to add to the cinematic profile of Scotland and to give work to Scottish actors. All of this does, indeed, mark a victory for those Scottish film interests and institutions which have sought to create a "Hollywood on the Clyde" against those Cassandra voices (the present writer's included) which have argued for a more diverse, low-budget Scottish cinema interrogating, among other things, the way Scotland is represented on screen.

There are several regressive discourses within which Scotland is represented, the most distasteful being Tartanry (doubly so in 1995/6 when the 250th anniversary of the 1745 uprising and the battle of Culloden are being commemorated). This is the discourse within which *Rob Roy* was constructed and the reason it has been so enthusiastically promoted by the Scottish Tourist Board. Tartanry vestigially informs *Braveheart* (a nocturnal burial scene is clearly based on an *Illustrated London News* print of Queen Victoria at Balmoral), but it has been constructed mainly within quite another discourse which might be called Dark Ageism.

Certainty about how to represent historical periods recedes the further back you go. The convention is that late Victorians are stiff and hypocritical at home and languidly supercilious in the colonial setting; early Victorians jolly and Dickensian; and eighteenth century figures sexually rumbustious. Prior to that, however, things begin to mist over and certain 'Dark Ages' tropes predominate: darkness; religiosity and/or mysticism; grinding poverty and filth; physical deformity; and, above all, unspeakable cruelty. These are the dominant tropes of *Braveheart*, although its simple-mindedness also owes something to Errol Flynn's star

vehicle *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, even to the extent of giving William Wallace a Little John-type companion.

This cinematic Dark Ageism can be tracked through Alexander Korda's *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (Charles Laughton's messy eating is a key trope); Carl Dreyer's *Day of Wrath*; Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* and *The Virgin Spring*; and Richard Fleischer's *The Vikings* to the cinematic adaptation of Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose*. This discourse informs the *mise en scène* of *Braveheart*, particularly the battle scenes which are all gore, pierced eyes and genitals, cloven skulls, severed limbs and high-pitched screams. It is present too in the morbid explicitness of Wallace's execution and the malignant leprosy of the Bruce's father. The obverse of this explicit unpleasantness is a cloying sentimentality which pervades the film as a whole, but is particularly evident in Wallace's relationships with Murron and Isabelle, both in the words spoken and the way the scenes are photographed.

The ideological project of *Braveheart* is to valorise both Wallace and the Bruce as Scottish national heroes. This is done in the crudest possible way. The complexity of the medieval Scottish social formation - with thirteen claimants to the throne only a few of which were based on the recognisably modern notion of primogeniture - would tax the skills of a trained historian. Predictably the issue is posed in *Braveheart* (set five hundred years before the concept of nationalism was articulated) as "freedom" for the Scottish people. It is part of *Braveheart*'s vulgarity that it cannot begin to signify how a thirteenth century consciousness might differ from a modern one.

The only feudal concept the film offers is *jus primae noctis*, the lord's right of sexual access on the first night of a tenant's marriage. Interestingly, the rejection of sexual violation fuel's *Rob Roy*'s resistance too, as though this is the only kind of motivation a modern audience could grasp. *Braveheart*'s incapacity to signify the melange of personal ambitions, familial ties and feudal obligations which motivated historical figures such as Robert the Bruce seriously affects the narrative, rendering the characters' motivations quite simply incomprehensible and making the Bruce, in particular, seem weak and credulous despite the film's attempts to heroise him. The valorising of Wallace and the Bruce is, in fact, a modern restatement of that 'invention of tradition' which has been active since the second half of the nineteenth century and is the key cultural strategy of nationalism. In the nineteenth century this process constructed Wallace as the Scottish hero *par excellence* and statues were raised to him in Scotland and throughout the Scottish Diaspora. Who knows, perhaps director and star, Mel Gibson, was inspired by the statue of Wallace raised at Ballarat in 1889. Certainly, if his film has any appeal to Scots it will be to the most regressively xenophobic among us.

Colin McArthur

The Bridges of Madison County

USA 1995

Director: Clint Eastwood

Certificate
12
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Companies
Amblin/Malpasio production
Producers
Clint Eastwood
Kathleen Kennedy
Associate Producers
Tom Rooker
Michael Maurer
Production Associates
Adam Bernhard
B. Ted Deiker
Erich Moeller
Kara Sjöblom
Channing Work
Gillian Wynn
Unit Production Manager
Jim Behnke
Location Manager
Ken Haber
Assistant Directors
Bill Bannerman
Robert Lorenz
Script Supervisor
Cate Hardman
Casting
Ellen Chenoweth
Screenplay
Richard LaGravenese
Based on the novel by
Robert James Waller
Director of Photography
Jack N. Green
**Camera Operator /
Steadicam Operator**
Stephen S. Campanelli
Editor
Joel Cox
Production Designer
Jeannine Oppewall
Art Director
William Arnold
Set Decorator
Jay Hart
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Steve Riley
Special Effects Consultant
John Frazier
Costume Design
Colleen Kelsall
Wardrobe Supervisor
David Davenport
Make-up/Hair Stylist
J. Roy Helland
Make-up
Mike Hancock
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Music
Lennie Niehaus
Music Editor
Donald Harris
Music Consultant
Bruce Ricker
Songs/Music Extracts
"Doe Eyes" by Lennie
Niehaus, Clint
Eastwood, piano solo
performed by Michael
Lang; "Put Another
Nickel in) Music! Music!
Music!" by Bernie
Baum, Stephan Weiss,
"Poinciana" by Buddy
Bernier, Nat Simon,
performed by Ahmad
Jamal; "Blue Gardenia"
by Bob Russell, Lester
Lee, "I'll Close My Eyes"
by Buddy Kaye, Billy
Reid, "Soft Winds"
by Fletcher Henderson,
Fred Royal, performed
by Dinah Washington;
"Leader of the Pack"
by George Morton, Jeff
Barry, Ellie Greenwich,
performed by The
Shangri-Las; "Easy
Living" by Leo Robin,
Ralph Rainger, "I See

Your Face Before Me"
by Howard Dietz,
Arthur Schwartz,
"It Was Almost Like
a Song", "For All We
Know" by Hal David,
Archie Jordan,
performed by Johnny
Hartman; "Baby I'm
Yours" by Van McCoy,
performed by Barbara
Lewis; "Jamin" with
J. R." by and performed
by James Rivers; "This
is Always" by Harry
Warren, Mack Gordon,
"It's a Wonderful
World" by Johnny
Watson, Harold
Adamson, Jan Savitt,
performed by Irene
Kral, The Junior Mance
Trio (with Bob
Cranshaw, Mickey
Roker); "Casta Diva"
(from "Norma")
by Vincenzo Bellini,
performed by Maria
Callas, Orchestra and
Chorus of Teatro
alla Scala Milano;
"Mon coeur s'ouvre
à ta voix" (from
"Samson et Dalila")
by Camille Saint-Saëns,
performed by Maria
Callas, Orchestre
National de la Radio-
diffusion Française
Supervising Sound Editors
Alan Robert Murray
Bub Asman
Supervising Dialogue Editor
Lucy Goldsow-Smith
Dialogue Editors
Joey Ippolito
Constance A. Kazmer
George Anderson
Jayme Parker
Supervising ADR
Dick Friedman
Supervising Foley
Scott D. Jackson
Foley Editors
Neil Burrow
Butch Wolf
Patrick Bietz
Sound Mixers
Willie D. Burton
Music:
Bobby Fernandez
Sound Re-recording Mixers
Les Fresholtz
Dick Alexander
Vern Poore
Sound Effects Editors
Gary Krivacek
Mike Dobie
Samuel C. Crutcher
John Morrissey
James J. Klingner
Technical Consultant
Ken Regan
Cast
Clint Eastwood
Robert Kincaid
Meryl Streep
Francesca Johnson
Annie Corley
Carolyn Johnson
Victor Slezak
Michael Johnson
Jim Haynie
Richard
Sarah Kathryn Schmitt
Young Carolyn
Christopher Kroon
Young Michael
Phyllis Lyons
Betty
Debra Monk
Madge
Richard Lage
Lawyer

Michelle Benes
Lucy Redfield
Alison Wiegert
Brandon Bobst
Children
Pearl Faessler
Wife
R. E. 'Stick' Faessler
Husband
Tania Mishler
Billie McKabb
Waitresses
Art Breese
Cashier
Lana Schwab
Saleswoman
Larry Loury
UPS Driver
James Rivers
Mark A. Brooks
Peter Cho
Eddie Dejean Sr

Jason C. Brewer
Kyle Eastwood
James River Band
George Orrison
Ken Billeter
Judy Trask
David Trask
Edna Olson
Dennis McCool
Michael C. Pommier
Jana Corkran
M. Jane Seymour
Karia Jo Soper
Cafe Patrons

12,105 feet
94 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
Technicolor

Madison County, Iowa. Brother and sister Carolyn and Michael Johnson are puzzled by their deceased mother, Francesca's, strange request to be cremated and have her ashes sprinkled from the Roseman covered bridge nearby, instead of being buried next to her dead husband, Richard. Instructions lead them to her notebooks, and they learn the story of what happened to her back in 1965....

1965. Francesca sees off Carolyn and Michael, then in their teens, and her husband, Richard, as they leave for the State Fair. Soon after their departure, a photographer named Robert Kincaid, on an assignment for *National Geographic* to photograph the covered bridges of Madison County, pulls up in his truck and asks for directions to the Roseman Bridge. Francesca shows him the way and invites him back to her house for dinner. She invites him back again the next night, they dance in the kitchen, and soon retire for a passionate night of lovemaking. Robert asks Francesca to run away with him. However, Francesca refuses to leave, knowing that the scandal would ruin her family's life and leave her eventually feeling embittered. Robert understands and leaves her on the fourth day of their time together, before her family returns home.

Over the years, Francesca takes out a subscription to *National Geographic*, receives a love letter from Robert, and thinks of him always. When Richard finally dies and the children are grown, she tries to contact Robert, only to find that he died some years ago and left everything to her. His lawyers send her his personal effects, including a book of photographs he made entitled *Four Days* which is dedicated to "F". The lawyer's letter explains that he had himself cremated and the ashes sprinkled from the Roseman Bridge....

After reading the notebooks, Michael and Carolyn go to the Roseman covered Bridge and sprinkle Francesca's ashes into the wind.

The *Bridges of Madison County* is that rarity, a film that is infinitely better than the original book on which it was based. Having slogged through Robert James Waller's appallingly-written but slim volume, I can only conjecture that the book's runaway success is attributable to the old-fashioned fan-

tasy it embodies. Its pitch is that people in Middle American small towns are capable of enormous passions and that it is noble to forsake those passions to go on living in hellish little Hicksvilles. This must be a generational thing because I don't get it, yet, at the screening I attended, many audience members over the age of 50 seemed to be in tears.

Many of the corniest bits are directly translated from Waller, such as the romantic hero Robert Kincaid's kiss-off line, delivered with uncharacteristic moistness by writer-director Clint Eastwood, "This kind of certainty comes but once in a lifetime." Screenwriter Richard LaGravenese, who also wrote *The Fisher King*, has wisely pruned and snipped out the most embarrassing Wallerisms (my favourite being "I am the highway and a peregrine and all the sails that ever went to sea," uttered during sex no less) and sneaked in some funny lines, such as the heroine's daughter Carolyn's lament: "In between bake sales I find out my mother was Anaïs Nin."

In spite of the mawkishness at its heart, the film's clean, technical efficiency makes it rather enjoyable. Eastwood is a highly competent director, although occasionally a dull one. Here, he shows that he knows the mechanics of romance and how to generate a *frisson* from the juxtaposition of mundanity with intense, cloaked passion. Such an intensity can only be effectively conveyed with judicious close-ups of very good actors, and, blessed with Meryl Streep on top form (looking very sexy in frumpy dresses) as Carolyn's mother Francesca, Eastwood is able to generate top class tear-jerking material. Knowing his own limitations as an actor, Eastwood, perhaps overgenerously, lets Streep carry the picture, lighting her beautifully inside darkened bridges, framing her in compositions filched from Edward Hopper's country paintings. Detail is sensual and domestic, suggesting that Eastwood is mellowing and perhaps more in touch with his 'feminine side' than usual.

There is a beautifully executed scene close to the end, only partly based on Waller, where Francesca sees Robert standing in the rain staring at her while she waits in the truck for her husband to come back from the shops. The rain is particularly convenient since Eastwood is not one of the great on-screen weepers, but in this instance he looks miserable and soggy with despair. Streep's distressed and repressed mannerisms which, hitherto accompanied by her obligatory perfect accent, had seemed over-polished, are spot-on in this sequence, especially when she watches him pulling away in his truck. With this Brief (momentary) Encounter, I forgave most of the risible schmaltz that had preceded it. If the film had ended there it would have been almost worthy of David Lean, but tied to Waller's original story, it bumbles on disappointingly for some time to its vapid conclusion.

Leslie Felperin

Carrington

United Kingdom 1995

Director: Christopher Hampton

Certificate
18
Distributor
Polygram
Production Company
Polygram Filmed
Entertainment presents
A Freeway/Shedlo
Production
Dora Productions Ltd
In association with
Cinea & Orsans/
Le Studio Canal Plus
Developed in
association with Euston
Films Ltd
With the assistance
of European Co-
production Fund Ltd
Executive Producers
Francis Boespflug
Philippe Carcassonne
Fabienne Vonier
Producers
Ronald Shedlo
John McGrath
Associate Producer
Chris Thompson
Production Co-ordinator
Tori Parry
Production Manager
Italy:
Rosanna Roditi
C.R.G. International
Location Manager
Nick Daubeny
Post-production Supervisor
Chloe Sizer
Assistant Directors
Guy Travers
Tim Lewis
William Booker
Italy:
Guido Cerasuolo
Casting
Fothergill & Lunn
Screenplay
Christopher Hampton
Based on the book
Lytton Strachey by
Michael Holroyd
Script Supervisor
Penny Eyles
Director of Photography
Denis Lenoir
Steadicam Operator
Peter Robertson
Graphic Artist
Jim Stanes
Editor
George Akers
Production Designer
Caroline Amies
Art Director
Frank Walsh
Pastiche Artists
Jane Gifford
Fred Gray
Nick Ferguson
Decorative Artist
Christopher Evans
Draughtsmen
Roger Bowles
Dennis Boshier
Nicky Rizzo-Gill
Costume Design
Penny Rose
Make-up/Hair Design
Chrissie Beveridge
Make-up/Hair Artists
Norma Webb
Elaine Davis
Titles
Peter Watson
Associates
Music
Michael Nyman

Songs/Music Extracts
"When This Lousy
War is Over" Trad.,
performed by Laurence
Payne; "Stomp Dance"
by J. L. Stewart,
performed by Simon
Chamberlain, Ray
Babington, Stuart
Brooks, John Piper;
"String Quintet in
C" by Franz Schubert,
performed by the
Amadeus Quartet,
Robert Cohen
Choreographer
Stuart Hopps
Sound Editor
Dennis McTaggart
ADR Editor/Foley Editor
Jupiter Sen
Sound Mixer
Peter Lindsay
ADR Mixer
Ted Swanscott
Foley Mixer
Edward Colyer
Sound Re-recording Mixers
Graham Daniel
Ray Merrin
Foley Artists
Felicity Cottrell
Jason Swanscott
Fight Arranger
William Hobbs

Cast
Emma Thompson
Carrington
Jonathan Pryce
Lytton Strachey
Steven Waddington
Ralph Partridge
Samuel West
Gerald Brenan
Rufus Sewell
Mark Gertler
Penelope Wilton
Lady Ottoline Morrell
Janet McTeer
Vanessa Bell
Peter Blythe
Phillip Morrell
Jeremy Northam
Beacus Penrose
Alex Kingston
Frances Partridge
Sebastian Harcombe
Rober Senhouse
Richard Clifford
Clive Bell
David Ryall
Mayor
Stephen Boxer
Military Rep
Annabel Mullion
Mary Hutchinson
Gary Turner
Duncan Grant
Georgiana Dacombe
Marjorie Genter
Helen Blatch
Nurse
Neville Phillips
Court Usher
Christopher Birch
Dr Starkey Smith
Daniel Betts
Porter
Simon Bye
Fly Driver
Marzio Idoni
Gondolier

11,002 feet
122 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour

Winter, southern England, 1915. Writer Lytton Strachey arrives at the country house of artist Vanessa Bell and her husband. He notices an

unusual, boyish-looking character frolicking in the garden. This turns out to be a young artist, Dora Carrington.

As they walk along the clifftops, Strachey attempts to kiss Carrington. She is repulsed, and later retaliates by creeping into his room by dead of night with a pair of scissors to cut off his beard. She decides against it, and the two become fast friends. Mark Gertler, another painter, is obsessed with Carrington and determined to sleep with her. She eventually consents, but not before she has declared her love for Strachey, who is gay. She and Strachey set up house in the country. Carrington takes a lover, a handsome young soldier named Reginald Partridge. Strachey falls for Partridge, suggests he change his name to Ralph and invites him to move in. Carrington, fearful that Strachey wouldn't consent to live with her alone, marries Partridge.

She starts an affair with Partridge's best friend, Gerald Brenan. Partridge, far from a faithful husband himself, is bitter. Carrington cares little about either man's jealousy. It is Strachey she loves. Strachey's book, *Eminent Victorians*, is published to enormous acclaim. With the proceeds, he buys a bigger house, and also starts an affair with a much younger man. Partridge leaves Carrington for another woman but Carrington is still happy to live with Strachey. He helps her cope with an unwanted pregnancy and she consoles him when his love affair breaks up.

In 1932, Strachey falls ill. Carrington becomes his devoted nurse. One day, when he's lying in bed, seemingly talking in his sleep, he confesses that he loved Carrington all along and bitterly regrets not marrying her. Shortly afterwards, he dies. Carrington decides she can't bear life without him and commits suicide with a shotgun.

Although inspired by Michael Holroyd's celebrated biography of Lytton Strachey, *Carrington* makes no attempt to portray Strachey's world in full. Its main concern is his relationship with Dora Carrington, and events are seen as much from her perspective as from his. The narrowness of focus is one of the film's strengths. Despite occasional glimpses of such sacred cows of the Bloomsbury Group as Duncan Grant, Lady Ottoline Morrell and Vanessa Bell, there is little wallowing in nostalgia, and a merciful absence of dialogue of the "How do you do I'm Maynard Keynes" variety. Carrington and Strachey's rejection of aristocratic high-jinks is spelled out early on, both by their caustic reaction to one of Lady Ottoline's hearty mid-war garden parties and by their decision to retreat from London's fashionable salons to the countryside.

Visually, we're in the realm of heritage cinema: country houses, gardens and pictorial English landscapes are foregrounded; costume and production design are intricately detailed. Hampton opts for a literary structure. The film opens with a lengthy intertitle and unfolds as a series of chapters. Much of the dialogue and voice-over



Eminently qualified: Emma Thompson

narration is taken from Carrington and Strachey's diaries, and from the letters they exchanged. There's occasionally something a little arch about Strachey's gnomic one-liners on such subjects as semen, death or posterity. (Jonathan Pryce claims to have based the voice for the character on a mix of Malcolm Muggeridge and Ned Sherrin, and speaks in clipped, high-pitched tones.) However, despite the literary-heritage trappings that come with the territory, Hampton never loses sight of the love affair at the core of the story.

"His knees," Carrington once replied when asked what attracted her to Strachey. Theirs was certainly a very unlikely romance. He was a sagacious, owl-like man of letters, a confirmed homosexual who rarely displayed any feeling, while she was an impulsive young artist. On the surface, this seems like another of those quintessentially English liaisons of the sort celebrated in such recent pictures as *The Remains of the Day* and *Shadowlands*. (Presumably, the success of those films enabled *Carrington*, which was written in the mid 1970s, finally to be made.)

But there is much more comedy here than either James Ivory or Richard Attenborough were able to bring to their stiff-upper-lipped weepies. Strachey's beard as much as his knees is the key to the romance. Not long after the they first meet, Carrington creeps into his room by dead of night, intending to cut it off as a prank. He wakes up just before she begins to snip, looks into her eyes, and she is mesmerised. As a couple, they're altogether too eccentric to fit comfortably into the stereotype of emotionally repressed lovers.

Strachey is, almost by definition, odd, but, compared to the other examples of English masculinity on display, he seems a paragon of commonsense. Hampton takes great pleasure in satirising the behaviour of the various boyfriends who flit through Carrington's life. There's Mark Gertler, the East End painter (played by Rufus Sewell in manic groove) who comes across as a

ridiculous caricature of the conventional romantic artist; there's her husband, 'Ralph' Partridge, an upright, unimaginative Englishman with all the conversational ability of the average "Norwegian dentist;" and there's her lover, Gerald Brenan, an intense, D. H. Lawrence-type who wants to run away with her to Spain.

Most of the action takes place in rooms or gardens. There are few big set-pieces. Hampton, roped in to direct his own script when Mike Newell withdrew from the project at the last minute, avoids Merchant Ivory-style grandeur. He places as much emphasis on looks and glances between the characters, on Michael Nyman's score and on Denis Lenoir's lighting, as on his own dialogue. In one telling scene, an excluded Carrington stands outside at dusk, looking in at the windows of the house as the various couples (Strachey with his new boyfriend, Partridge with his new mistress) prepare for bed. Hampton also has an eye for detail: after Strachey's death, Carrington is shown burning his possessions, and there's a little close-up of his round spectacles on the fire.

Ultimately, *Carrington* relies on its two central performances. Both are mannered – given the quiddities of the characters they're playing, they could hardly be otherwise. Pryce, pipe-smoking, swathed in tweed and with that extraordinary beard, may strike an irritating note with his affected diction, but shows such precision of gesture and such gentleness that he manages to make what easily could have been a caricature immensely moving. Emma Thompson is hardly a natural androgynous, but she too is effective, capturing both Carrington's fiery non-conformism and her vulnerability, her bafflement at her own all-consuming obsession with a man she has next to nothing in common with. Wipe off the high culture gloss and period sheen, and the film emerges as a delicately observed, very affecting melodrama.

Geoffrey Macnab

Chungking Express (Chongqing Senlin)

Hong Kong 1994

Director: Wong Kar-Wai (Wang Jiawei)

Certificate	Make-up
12	Guan Lina
Distributor	Hairstylists
ICA Projects	Wu Yuhao
Production Company	Li Zhenglin
Jet Tone	Music
Executive Producer	Frankie Chan/
Chan Pui-Wah/[Chen	[Chen Shunqi]
Peihua]	Roel A. Garcia
Producer	Song
Chan Yi-Kan/	"California Dreamin'"
[Chen Yijin]	by John Philips,
Production Supervisors	Michelle Philips,
Jacky Pang/	performed by The
[Peng Qihua]	Mamas and The Papas
Jiang Yuecheng	Sound Recordists
Production Manager	Liang Da
Jacky Pang/	Liang Lizhi
[Peng Qihua]	Chen Weixiong
Post-production Supervisor	
Xiao Rong	Cast
Assistant Directors	Brigitte Lin (Lin Qingxia)
Jiang Yuecheng	The Drug Dealer
Zeng Shaoting	Takeshi Kaneshiro
Screenplay	He Qiwu, Cop #223
Wong Kar-Wai/	Tony Leung
[Wang Jiawei]	(Liang Chaowei)
Directors of Photography	Cop #663
Christopher Doyle	Faye Wong (Wang Jinwen)
Lau Wai-Keung/	Faye
[Liu Weiqiang]	Valerie Chow (Shou Jialing)
2nd Unit Director	Air Hostess
of Photography	'Piggy' Chan
Chen Guanghong	(Chen Jinquan)
Visual Effects	Manager of
Cheng Xiaolong	'Midnight Express'
Editors	Guan Lina
William Chang/	Huang Zhiming
[Zhang Shuping]	Liang Zhen
Hai Kit-Wai/[Xi Jiawei]	Zao Songshen
Kuang Zhiliang	
Production Designer	8,730 feet
William Chang/	97 minutes
[Zhang Shuping]	
Art Director	In colour
Qiu Weiming	Subtitles
Special Effects	
Ding Yunda	
Deng Weijue	
Costume Design	
Yao Huiming	

Hong Kong, 28 April 1994. He Qiwu, plain-clothes cop #223, is chasing a suspect when he bumps into a woman in a blonde wig – a woman with whom he will fall in love 56 hours later. #223 is pining for his ex-girlfriend May, who ditched him on April Fool's Day; he has bought a can of pineapple with the sell-by date of 1 May every day since, pineapple being May's favourite fruit and May 1st being his birthday. The woman in the blonde wig meanwhile accepts a large shipment of heroin from a western man and hires Indian families from various businesses in Chungking Mansions to smuggle it abroad. On April 30, however, the Indians abscond and she launches a frantic search for them and the drugs. She intimidates another Indian into giving her a lead, and manages to shoot one of the intended smugglers before he can shoot her.

That same evening, #223 eats all 30 accumulated cans of pineapple and reconciles himself to the fact May isn't coming back to him. After throwing ►

up, he stumbles into a sleazy bar determined to fall in love with the first woman to walk in – who happens to be the woman in the blonde wig. They get drunk together and he takes her to a hotel room, where she falls deeply asleep and he sits up all night watching old Cantonese movies on television and eating room service meals. As dawn breaks, he leaves to go jogging – and is overjoyed when the woman pages him to wish him a happy 25th birthday. Later that day the woman ambushes her treacherous drug supplier and shoots him dead.

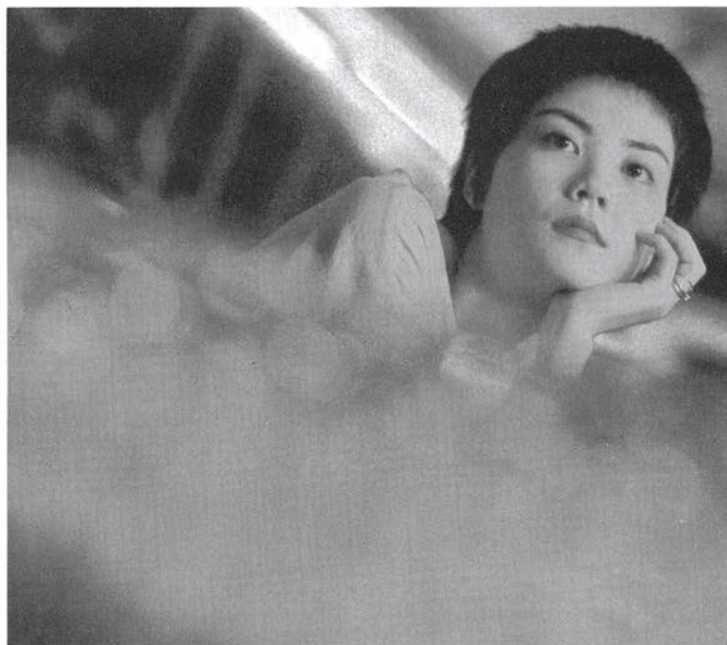
That evening #223 is at the Midnight Express fast food counter in Lan Kwai Fong where the well-meaning manager suggests that he try to date his new server Faye – whom #223 initially takes for a boy. Six hours later, Faye will fall in love with uniformed cop #663, who comes to the counter every night to buy a chef's salad for his air hostess girlfriend. Two days after the manager persuades #663 to vary the menu, the girlfriend leaves him; she drops off a goodbye letter and #663's key at the counter.

When #663 declines to take delivery of the letter, Faye contrives to learn his address and uses the key to let herself into his apartment in his absence. She explores, tidies and rearranges the rooms and restocks the fishtank. #663, a fantasist given to having conversations with the objects around him, dimly notices the changes but fails to realise what is happening until he comes home unexpectedly and catches Faye there. She flees in embarrassment. Finally realising that she likes him, #663 asks Faye for a date, but she stands him up and leaves Hong Kong for California.

A year later Faye, now an air hostess, is back in Hong Kong. She goes to Midnight Express and is amazed to find that #663 has resigned from the force and taken over the counter. He asks her to make him a boarding pass, to go wherever she wants to take him.

Wong Kar-Wai's rapturous entertainment is not only the zingiest visit to Heartbreak Hotel in many years but also one of the first films of the 90s to feel genuinely fresh and original. It recaptures the emotional excitement and zest for cinema found in a movie like Jean-Luc Godard's *Bande à part* three decades ago. Its qualities are partly down to matching the pace of life in present-day Hong Kong – but they also reflect Wong's new-found ability to see the funny side of the space between men and women. We are still in Wong Kar-Wai's patented world of solipsistic characters, private quirks and obsessions, as explored in *Days of Being Wild* and *Ashes of Time*, but the people in *Chungking Express* are better-adjusted to their own loneliness, and their fundamental cheerfulness is contagious.

The film's two stories intersect very little – there are fleeting glimpses of Faye and cop #663 in the first story, and both cops patronise the Midnight Express snack counter – but the join is



Midnight mover: Faye Wong (Wang Jinwen)

seamless and the mood of comic-romantic melancholy is remarkably consistent. The first story is shorter and much busier, cross-cutting from #223's forlorn attempts to rustle up a date and wrangles with convenience store clerks over sell-by dates to the women's urgent packaging of the heroin in condoms and hollow-soled shoes and her frantic search of the crevices of Chungking Mansions for the absconding drug couriers. The second story takes its time over #663's efforts to cheer himself up – not to mention cheering up his household effects like a bar of soap that is wasting away and a threadbare towel that cannot stop 'weeping' – and Faye's increasingly outrageous excuses for skipping work and invading the cop's apartment, but feels all the more engrossing for it. Motifs common to both stories (cuddly toys, chef's salads, time-lapse photography) are of no particular significance in themselves, but help to unify the tone and suggest the universality of the predicaments and feelings.

Actually, though, virtually everything pulls together in *Chungking Express*. Chris Doyle's brilliant, fingertip-held cinematography is in perfect synch with both Wong's sense of lives on the wing and the extremely likeable performances of the four stars, two of them singers making their debuts as actors. Faye Wong and Takeshi Kaneshiro are both real finds: the rangy Kaneshiro, equally fluent in Cantonese, Mandarin and Japanese as he reveals when he tries to chat up Brigitte Lin in the bar, is a quintessential 25-year-old, clinging to his adolescence but starting to face up to maturity while Faye Wong, a Beijing girl in Hong Kong, is a tall, crew-cut gamine whose effortless ditziness simultaneously promises and refuses sex in a way that will undoubtedly cause viewers everywhere to fall in love. The two established stars more than hold their own against these sparky newcomers: Brigitte Lin is all-but-unrecognisable in blonde wig, raincoat and shades, but nonetheless regis-

ters forcefully as a woman with more than just missing heroin on her mind, while Tony Leung (the Tony Leung of *A City of Sadness* and *Hard Boiled*, not the Tony Leung of *L'Amant*) has never been more charming or beautiful, not even in Stanley Kwan's *Love Unto Waste*.

But *Chungking Express* is finally a director's film. The level of invention in the plotting and the film language is almost profligate, and the wit of the writing leaves the average Tarantino dialogue sounding like sitcom filler. Wong gives each of his four protagonists voice-overs to articulate their inner tensions, and each is a small gem of psychological acuity. The blonde-wigged woman comments that she always wears a raincoat and shades because she's always unsure whether it will rain or turn out sunny. Cop #223, whose password for pager messages is "Undying love", is obsessed by the thought that everything comes with an expiry date – when he isn't marvelling that the people we jostle past in the street every day may become our acquaintances, friends or even lovers. Faye, who can't hear enough of The Mamas and Papas' "California Dreamin'", recalls how she arrived early for her date with #663 in the California Restaurant only to sit watching the rain outside and start wondering about the weather in the real California. And #663 can't help projecting his feelings on the objects around him, or thinking of life in terms of long-haul air travel.

As Wong well knows, these characters (and supporting characters like the manager of the Midnight Express snack counter, played indelibly by the film's stills photographer) add up to a panorama of modern city lives and attitudes: lonely, divided between public and private personae, resigned to disappointment but never less than optimistic. Many viewers will agree that he has caught a certain mind-set and mood with absolutely accuracy, and all will be grateful that he's done it with such warmth and good humour.

Tony Rayns

The City of Lost Children (La Cité des enfants perdus)

France 1995

Director: Jean-Pierre Jeunet/Marc Caro

Certificate
15

Distributor
Entertainment

Production Company
Claudie Ossard
productions/
Constellation
productions/Lumiere/
Studio Canal +/France 3
Cinéma/Elias
Querejeta/
Télé Mûnchin
In association with
Centre National de
la Cinématographie
Cofimage 4/Cofimage 5
Studio Image

Producer
Claudie Ossard

Production Supervisors
Daniel Szuster
Spain:
Primitivo Alvaro

Unit Production Manager
Jean-Jacques Damiani

Unit Managers
Edith Pommerol
Gilles Saulnier
Bruno Vignier

Location Manager
Marie-Laure Valla

Post-production Supervisor
Céline de Seynes
Isabelle Morax

Assistant Directors
Jean-Marc Tostivint
Grégoire Barachin
Christophe Douchand

Casting
Pierre-Jacques
Benichou
Children:
Gabrielle Beroff
Nathalie-Esther

Screenplay
Gilles Adrien
Jean-Pierre Jeunet
Marc Caro

Dialogue
Gilles Adrien

Additional Dialogue
Guillaume Laurant
Jean-Pierre Jeunet

Script Supervisor
Aruna Villiers

Director of Photography
Darius Khondji

2nd Unit Director of Photography
Michel Amathieu

Underwater Photography
Roland Savoye

Steadicam Operator
Marc Koninckx

Digital Special Effects
Pitof
Duboi
Supervisor:
Emmanuelle Soupa
Technical Co-ordinator:
Laure Lacroix
Production Executive:
Antoine Simkin
Motion Control
Operators:
Colin Watkinson
Michel Koelblen
Thierry de Bigre
Field Recorder
Operator:
Marc Jouvenau
Télécinéma:
Claire Deruelle
Jean-Clement Soret
Digitisation:
Jerome Arthuis
Karine Marchandou
Digital Compositing:
Alain Carsoux

Thomas Duval
Patricia Medjahed
Adrien Blanchat
Sebastien Caudron
Marco Pacosi
Christophe Richard
Animation
Co-ordinators:
Hélène de Thelin
Benedicte Vallaux-
Harvut
3D Effects/Animation:
Paul-Etienne Bourde
Cedric Houplain
Graphics:
Veronique Zylberfain
Matte Paintings:
Jean-Marie Vives
Computerised Images
Pierre Buffin
Buf Compagnie
Animation/3D:
Olivier Gilbert
Yves Lapeillet
Claude Chabot
Frédéric Soumagnas
Denis van Waerbecke
Arnon Manor
Marie-Laure Lafitte
Serge Calka
Delphine Quinternet
Mathieu Sch'noize
Alexandre Roane
Jean-Marc Castera
Aurelia Neveux
Production:
Frédéric Ortun
Ion Babeau
Céline Jalaguier
Jeanne Boizinger
Soraya Aquidad
Editor
Hervé Schneid
Artistic Director
Marc Caro
Set Design
Jean Rabasse
Executive:
Claude Poulain
Set Decorator
Aline Bonetto
Draftsmen
Michele Elsaïr
Marc Fivel
Philippe Harlez
Enes Muftic
Sculptures
Marie Baduel Legarrec
Brigitte Baudet
Brigitte Cardinal
Corinne Forget
François Bernard
Vincent Gazier
Jean-Louis Lebreton
Catherine Lefferrière-
Weitzem
Véronique Mallaval
François Roux
Models
Valérie Bertoux
Yann Haugomat
Pierre Le Garrec
Special Effects Supervisors
Yves Domenjoud
Olivier Gleyze
Jean-Baptiste Bonetto
Jean-Christophe
Spadaccini
Special Effects Sculptors
Denis Gastou
Pierre-Paul Jayne
Mechanical Special Effects
Pascal Molina
Costume Design
Jean-Paul Gaultier
Make-up Supervisor
Nathalie Tissier
Prosthetics
Benoît Lestang

Tattoo Designs
Fabien Esnard-Lacombe
Cyclops Contact Lenses
Mr Fournier-Dencott
Chief Hairstylist
John Nollet
Music
Angelo Badalamenti
Music Conductor
Stepan Konicek
Music performed by
L'Orchestre
Philharmonique de
la Ville de Prague
Voices:
Emmanuel Quatra
Jean Daniel Laval
Monique Bressy
Jackie Berger
Eve Lorach
Clemence Massart
Eric Rey
Natacha Gerritsen
Jacqueline Staup
Music Consultant
René Taquet
Songs
"Nursery Rhyme"
by Florence Magna-
Schneid; "Dwarf's
Song" by André Iguai;
"Who Will Take Your
Dreams Away?" by
Marianne Faithfull,
Angelo Badalamenti,
performed by Marianne
Faithfull; "Marinella"
by G. Kuger, R. Pujol,
V. Scotto, Audifred,
"Petit Papa Noël" by
H. Martinet, Raymond
Vincy, performed
by Tino Rossi; "Bon
anniversaire" by
Louisguy, H. Contet;
"Deux guitares"
(traditional) performed
by Yaska Nemeth; "My
Very Sweet Lady" by
A. Coppola; "Serenade
Gouden Hart" by C. Frei
Sound
Pierre Excoffier
Gérard Hardy
Vincent Arnardi
Sound Mixers
Vincent Arnardi
Thierry Lebon
Sound Effects
Jean-Pierre Halbwachs
Marc Caro
Franc Lebon
Bruno Mercere
Laurent Kossayan
Jean-Pierre Lelong
Foley Artists
Jacques Levy
Françoise Meaulny-Levy
Diving Consultant
Marcel Collon
Stunt Co-ordinator
Patrick Cauderlier

Cast
Ron Perlman
One
Daniel Emilfork
Krank
Judith Vittet
Miette
Dominique Pinon
Diver/Clones/Stocle
Jean-Claude Breyfus
Marcello, Flea Tamer
Genevieve Brunet
Odile Mallet
Octopus
Mireille Mossé
Mademoiselle Bismuth
Serge Merin
Leader of the Cyclops
François Hadji-Lazaro
Killer
Rufus
Peeler
Ticky Holgado
Ex-acrobat
Jean-Louis Trintignant
Irvin's Voice
Dominique Bettenfeld
Bogdan
Lothi Yahyaji
Melchior
Thierry Gilbault
Brutus
Marc Caro
Brother Ange-Joseph

Mapi Galan
Lune
Briac Barthélémy
Bottle
Alexis Pivot
Tadpole
Léo Rubin
Jeannot
Pierre-Quentin Faesch
Pipo
Joseph Lucien (Comar)
Denrée
Guillaume Billod-Morel
Child
Ham-Chau Luong
Tattoo Artist
Hong-Mai Thomas
Tattoo Artist's Wife
Daniel Adric
Cyclops
Frankie Pain
Barmaid
Enrique Villanueva
Spainard
Chris Huerta
Father Christmas
Lorella Cravotta
Woman at her Window
René Marquant
Captain
Bezak
Helmsman
Philippe Beautier
Marc Amyot
Jean-Philippe Labadie
Cyril Rubin
Bruno Journé
Double Clones
Dominique Chevallier
Tied-up Guard
René Pivot
Glazier
Michel Smolionoff
Awake Trump
Christophe Salengro
Eric Nouzelet
Soldiers
Angélique Philibert
Marie Piémontese
Antoinette Bias
Zak Russomanno
Djamila Bouda
Lauren Geoffroy
Strippers
Lili Cognard
Winner
Raphaële Bouchard
Miette, age 15
Babeth Etienne
Miette, age 37
Rachel Boulenger
Miette, age 43
Hane Geron
Miette, age 82
Buster Vorbraeken
Krank, age 4
Jérémy Freund
Krank, age 12
Joris Geneste
Krank, age 36
Michel Motu
Krank, age 45
Eglantine Blanckaert
Gaetan Bouyala
Michael Bussinger
Jonathan Gatinois
Josha Kaufmann
Morgan Mariac
Caroline Marsily
Geoffroy Morange
Sébastien Thaisart
Schoolchildren
Charlotte Bienfait
Camille Dufeu
Robinson Fouillé
Alysia Hoffert
Sandy Kontargyris
Andrew Laupen
Théo Madueno
Arthur Mazet
Fackry M'Saidie
Gabriel Pierre
Bérangère Pivot
Charlotte Ribaud-Chevrey
Laura Robert
Caroline Rochand
Caroline Yvan
Babies

10,118 feet
112 minutes

Dolby stereo
in colour
Subtitles

A dank and decrepit port has seen a spate of child kidnappings by members of The Cyclops, an apocalyptic sect of blind people who see through single artificial eyes. Sideshow strongman One takes the hungry three-year-old orphan Denrée as his adopted brother just before the child is kidnapped and whisked off to a rig in the heavily mined sea, base of the power-crazed Krank, who lacks the ability to dream and tries to steal dreams from the kidnapped children. (Krank provides the sect with artificial eyes in return for the children.) Krank uses the dream machines devised by his former colleague Irvin – who survives only as a disembodied brain in a tank and is prone to migraines – but cannot understand why the children yield him nothing but nightmares. He is consoled by his servant Miss Bismuth, who commands a team of six identical clones.

Determined to rescue Denrée, One tries to enlist the help of the gang of street kids controlled by the twin sisters Zette and Line (known as The Octopus) and eventually teams up with the feisty nine-year-old Miette. Captured and sentenced to death by The Cyclops, One is rescued by retired freak show manager Marcello (whose help has been enlisted by his former employees The Octopus), but Miette apparently drowns in the harbour. She is in fact saved by a mysterious diver, an amnesiac scavenger living in an air-tight underwater chamber, who returns to the city – where she finds One drowning his sorrows over her death in a bar. The diver meanwhile retrieves from the sea one of Denrée's bottled dreams, which has been smuggled off the rig at Irvin's instigation; the dream reawakens the diver's memory (he recalls that he was once Krank's partner, and the man from whom the servants were cloned) and then wafts around the port, alerting Miette and others to Denrée's plight.

Escaping a fiendish plan by The Octopus to turn them against each other, One and Miette row out to the rig, avoiding the mines with the aid of a map found tattooed on the skull of a Vietnamese tattooist. At the same time, the diver sets out for the rig across the sea bed. Krank is about to vamp the entire contents of Denrée's brain when One/Miette and the diver launch parallel attacks on the rig. Miss Bismuth is harpooned and the clones scatter in confusion. Irvin tells Miette that she can save Denrée only by entering his dream, which she does – almost succumbing to Krank's malign influence in the process. Krank dies in his own machine as everyone else evacuates the rig – except for the diver, who has dynamited the entire structure and tied himself to its girders. He decides he would rather escape after all, but a seagull settles on the plunger, setting off a huge explosion. Safe on a boat in the arms of One and Miette, the well-fed Denrée gives a satisfied burp.

Jeunet and Caro go digital. The images in *The City of Lost Children* are vastly more elaborate (and expen-

sive) than those in *Delicatessen* and crowded with high-tech visual effects, but rooted in the same MTV aesthetic: all surface dazzle, no space for depth or resonance. This is a cinema without after-images, engineered for maximum instant gratification.

As a "dark fairy tale for all ages", the movie is a non-starter compared with films like *Gremilins* and the first *Nightmare on Elm Street*. Its postmodern insistence on recycled images and ideas and its obsession with the freakish and grotesque at the expense of any immediate reality rob it of true emotional impact. It misunderstands the nature of fairy tales as comprehensively as *Desperate Remedies* misunderstood the nature of melodrama, ending up a camp shadow of the film it would like to be. As an extended music video, though, it's not too bad. The concept is David Lynch meets Wes Craven, with Dickens and Mervyn Peake as the fashionably retro matchmakers; the visuals run the gamut from fascinating fascism (the 'religious' ceremonies of the Cyclops sect) to interactive games (point-of-view shots through the eyes of a leaping poisoned flea). The occasional image even approaches the level of poetic fantasy routinely achieved by Georges Méliès nearly a century ago.

But the plot, for all its density, quickly becomes a drag. Lacking the analytical underpinnings which put *The Company of Wolves* into the interesting failure category, *The City of Lost Children* spends nearly two hours trying to scale its own peak of technical ingenuity, coming up with 'spectacular' visuals (six identical clones in one frame, images which distort as if printed on melting plastic) whose only real tension arises from the need to out-do the preceding visuals. It soon becomes apparent that the profusion of characters and narrative threads is a camouflage for the shortage of engaging dramatic ideas. The movie is full of scenes like the attempted seduction of One by a blowsy hooker in a waterfront bar which would pass muster as referential motifs in a music video but lack even the most basic attempts to bring them to life as drama. And the generally low level of humour does little to rescue viewer morale.

There is the odd compensation to reward those kept awake by Angelo Badalamenti's over-lush score. Judith Vittet makes a spirited debut as Miette, suggesting that she has a future beyond vacuous special-effects movies. Jean-Paul Gaultier's costumes are functionally witty; it was a particularly smart idea to dress the ugly sisters Zette and Line like the famous Berlin transvestite Charlotte von Mahlsdorf. And the climactic battle between Krank and Miette for the mind of Denrée is as well-imagined as anything in the *Elm Street* series: Krank is morphed back to his handsome youth and infancy while Miette morphs to old age in a dance of time that has an authentic oneiric charge. Mostly, though, this is one strictly for overgrown boys who get a kick out of digital visual effects.

Tony Rayns

Dolores Claiborne

USA 1995

Director: Taylor Hackford

Certificate
18
Distributor
Rank
Production Company
Castle Rock
Entertainment
Producers
Taylor Hackford
Charles Mulvehill
Associate Producers
Gina Blumenfeld
Michael Kelly
Production Co-ordinator
Gina Fowler
Production Manager
Joseph Boccia
Location Managers
Debra Beers
Gary Swim
Assistant Directors
Josh McLaglen
Christopher Ball
Kristie Sills
Kayla Popp
Lars Winther
Casting
Nancy Klopfer
Toronto:
Ross Clydesdale
Nova Scotia:
John Dunsworth
Associate:
Stacey Rosen
Screenplay
Tony Gilroy
Based on the book
by Stephen King
Script Supervisors
Shelley Crawford
Kathryn Buck
Director of Photography
Gabriel Beristain
Additional Photography
Steve Bernstein
Cloud Photography
Pat O'Neill
Camera Operators
Freddie Cooper
Toronto:
Andy Chmura
Steadicam Operator
Jeff Mart
Visual Effects
The Computer Film
Company
Supervisor:
Janek Sirrs
Digital Designers:
Rob Hodgson
David Fuhrer
Richard Bane
Producers:
Janet Yale
Stuart McAra
Additional Visual Effects
VIFX
Richard Hollander
Editor
Mark Warner
Production Designer
Bruno Rubio
Art Director
Dan Yarhi
Set Decorators
Steve Shewchuk
Toronto:
Elinore Galbraith
Set Dressers
David Hopkins
Lorne Armstrong
Robert Grani
Dan Owens
Draughtsman
Mark Laing
Scenic Artist
Bruno Robotti
Storyboard Artist
Raymond Prado
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Ted Ross
Costume Design
Shay Cunliffe
Make-up Supervisor
Luigi Rocchetti
Hairstylists
Aldo Signorette
Rejean Goderre

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Music
Danny Elfman
Music Conductor
Richard Stone
Orchestrations
Steve Bartek
Music Producer
Danny Elfman
Music Editor
Curt Sobel
Music Consultant
Arlene Fishbach
Songs
"Happy Days Are Here
Again" by Milton Ager,
Jack Yellen; "Night
in the Afternoon"
by Hendrik Muerkens
Supervising Sound Editor
David E. Stone
Dialogue Editors
Richard Corwin
J. H. Arruffat
Supervising Foley Editor
Vanessa Theme Ament
ADR Editors
Julia Evershade
Thomas Whiting
Foley Editor
Ed Callahan
Production Sound Mixer
Glen Gauthier
Sound Recordists
Denise Bell
Susan McLean
Andy Bass
David Marquette
ADR Mixer
Doc Kane
Foley Mixer
Marilyn Graf
Foley Recordist
Robert Alstadter
Music Recordist
Robert Fernandez
Music Mixer
Shawn Murphy
Sound Re-recording Mixers
Richard Portman
Gary Bourgeois
Thomas Gerard
Sound Effects Editors
Paul Timothy Carden
Elliot L. Koretz
Michael J. Benavente
Bill Jacobs
Curt Shulkey
Sound Effects
Eric Potter
Foley Artists
Vanessa Theme Ament
Hilda Ann Hodges
Technical Consultant
Charles N. Love
Stunt Co-ordinator
Gary Davis

Cast
Kathy Bates
Dolores Claiborne
Jennifer Jason Leigh
Selena St George
Judy Parfitt
Vera Donovan
Christopher Plummer
Detective John Mackey
David Strathairn
Joe St George
Eric Bogosian
Peter
John C. Reilly
Constable Frank
Stamshaw
Ellen Muth
Young Selena
Bob Gunton
Mr Pease
Roy Cooper
Magistrate
Wayne Robson
Sammy Marchant
Ruth Marshall
Secretary
Weldon Allen
Bartender

Tom Gallant
Searcher
Kelly Burnett
Jack Donovan
Matt Appleby
Thomas Skinner
Kids on Street
Vernon Steele
Ferry Vendor
Taffara Jessica
Stella Murray
Young Selena, age 5
Susan Lane
Crying Girl

Frank Adamson
Ed Rubin
Detective Supervisors
Sandy MacDonald
Sheriff
Dean Ellertson
Moving Man
11,797 feet
131 minutes
Dolby stereo
In colour
Anamorphic

Tall Island, Maine. Elderly Vera Donovan is found dead and her live-in housekeeper Dolores Claiborne is suspected of the murder and arrested. Dolores' daughter, Selena St George, a young, New York-based journalist, returns to her home town to investigate. Years ago, Dolores was accused and acquitted of murdering her husband, Joe. Selena believes her mother is guilty of both murders and confronts her, but Dolores maintains her innocence. Dolores is let out on bail and returns to her old home with Selena, who reluctantly agrees to stay with her. Through flashbacks, Joe is shown to have been an alcoholic who beat his wife. Dolores had originally started working for Vera to save up money so that she could escape with Selena.

At Vera's house to collect Dolores' things, Selena and Dolores are confronted by Detective Mackey, who worked on Dolores' previous murder case. He reveals that Vera left everything in her will to Dolores, which provides a possible motive for the murder. However, a flashback reveals that Vera fell accidentally and refused Dolores' attempts to help her. In the past, Joe had become increasingly violent in his attacks on Dolores and he abused Selena, who has blocked the memory. When Dolores discovered the abuse, she made haste with her plans to leave Tall Island but discovered that Joe had embezzled her savings. Under all the strain, she broke down in front of Vera who proved sympathetic to her case and suggested getting rid of Joe. Dolores then killed him while the rest of the town was celebrating an eclipse of the sun, making the murder look like an accident.

In the present, Selena decides to leave Tall Island. Listening to a tape Dolores made that explains the past, Selena at last begins to remember what happened to her as a child and turns back. She arrives just as Dolores' case comes up, gives evidence and pleads for the case to be dismissed. Dolores' innocence is established.

"Sometimes being a bitch is the only thing that a woman can hold onto," is the oft-repeated line in *Dolores Claiborne*. Bette Davis might well have spat such a sentiment as Rosa in King Vidor's *Beyond the Forest*, a sister under the prickly skin to murder suspect Dolores Claiborne. Indeed, this Taylor Hackford adaptation of Stephen King's psychological thriller seems to be harking back to the excessive splendours of films by Vidor and John Stahl (director of the original films *Magnificent Obses-*



A woman who does: Kathy Bates

sion and *Imitation of Life* later remade by Douglas Sirk).

This is most obvious in the scenes around the killing of Dolores' husband Joe that takes place while Tall Island – the kind of lost resort that most girls would want to get out of – prepares for the sun's total eclipse. It's an apocalyptic moment when the sun is briefly snuffed out and the sky bleeds deepest crimson as Dolores leads the despicable Joe to his well deserved fate. This is as gory a moment as this particular Stephen King can offer. Horror here is of a kind that festers away unseen while three generations of women deal with abusive men (Dolores' supposed victim Vera also disposed of her philanthropic husband.) Yet here the revenge of the abused – which has recently become a soap opera staple (think of the Jordaches in *Brookside*) – is given a euphoric twist, and depicted as a cathartic act of exorcism.

With its concertina flashback structure bleeding between the present and several different points in the past, the film is fairly unconcerned about whether Dolores committed the crimes. It would rather come to some understanding of her along with Selena and Vera. The film is more about the cracking of their polished carapaces, the understanding of a seemingly unsympathetic trio. In this respect Hackford has got the cast just right with Kathy Bates, Jennifer Jason Leigh and Judy Parfitt all acting out roles which are in themselves carefully constructed acts.

Particularly apt here is Jennifer Jason Leigh's tendency towards an aloof interiority in her performance. As Selena, she is a woman bound in on herself who can only be read by her gestures, such as the constant application of handcream (her mother, we learn, has rough skinned mitts), while Dolores can only find out about her daughter's present life by looking through her luggage. Consequently, the twists in *Dolores Claiborne* are provided when the women of Tall Island let their charac-

ters slip: for example, when the cold and haughty Vera, dictating elaborate rules and regulations about the shining of the silver and the starching of the linen, softens to the distraught Dolores' dilemma. Similarly, one begins to see beyond Dolores' bufoonish, grouchy persona and discern the pain, as she bustles around muttering such idiotic catchphrases as "cheese and crackers".

Certainly to begin with, Kathy Bates' Dolores shares the same howdy-doody hick mannerisms as the character Annie Wilkes she played in *Misery*. With Bates cast in the title role, *Dolores Claiborne* draws overt comparisons between its heroine and the psychotic, frumpy nurse of the earlier film, thus playing on the audience's expectations. There is even the obligatory in-joke as Dolores cleans Vera's collection of porcelain porkers, reminding us of Annie Wilkes' favorite pets. Sows. Bitches. Women: it's a familiar King theme. But *Dolores Claiborne* is like a revisionist take on his earlier themes, as though he wants to spell out quite overtly what might make the women monstrous.

Carrie and *Misery* (both the books and the film adaptations) allow for feminist against-the-grain readings, but here the film is quite clearly inviting a feminist interpretation. "It's a depressingly masculine world that we live in," declares Vera, as if we need clarification after witnessing Joe's savage bouts. Dolores castigates the bank for allowing her husband to draw on the savings account that she opened: "It's because I am a woman, isn't it?" And it's because it is a man's, man's world Dolores has to be so devilishly sneaky. Meanwhile, Selena is the disbelieving daughter who like Detective Mackey believes in her mother's guilt. Hers is a voyage of conversion, as she finally sees what has been bleached out and eclipsed in her memory over the years. Indeed, *Dolores Claiborne* sheds new light on just what a bitch might be.

Lizzie Francke

Fall Time

USA 1994

Director: Paul Warner

Certificate
18
Distributor
PolyGram
Production Company
Capitol Films Ltd
presents
A Bates Entertainment
Production
Executive Producer
Jay Cohen
Producer
Edward Bates
Line Producer
Robert Magaulla
Associate Producers
Rochelle Bates
Larry Oliver
Production Co-ordinator
Rebecca Gibson
Unit Production Manager
Susan V. McConnell
2nd Unit:
Jeff Tanner
Location Managers
Shannon Rippy
Jeff Tanner
Post-production Supervisor
Clark Henderson
Post-production Co-ordinator
Isabel Sumayao
2nd Unit Director
Dorsay Alavi
Assistant Directors
Derek E. Johansen
Mark Anthony Little
Chris Gilmer
Michael G. Jefferson
2nd Unit:
Mike Haley
Script Supervisor
Scott Peterson
Casting
Andrea Stone
Guttfreund
Laurel Smith
Screenplay
Steve Alden
Paul Skemp
Director of Photography
Mark J. Gordon
2nd Unit Director of Photography
Tom Trovato
Steadicam Operator
Tim Scheffer
Editors
Steve Nevius
Additional:
Donald Likovich
Production Designer
Andrew Precht
Art Director
Alison Sadler
Set Decorator
Paul E. Martin
Costume Design
Elena Baranova
Costume Supervisor
Pauline White
Make-up Artists
Tena Austin
Kenny Diaz
Key Hairstylist
Mitchell Stone
Additional Make-up/Hair
Stacy Black
Andrea London
Sara Seidman
Title Design
Tanagram/Chicago
Titles/Opticals
Title House
Music
Hummie Mann
Music Editors
Jeff Mar
David Grimaldi
Songs/Music Extracts
"Scream" At The Moon" by Dewey Terry, Tyler Bates, Paul Gutierrez, performed by Dewey Terry; "I See Trouble", "Jimmy Domino Theme Song", "Slow Dance" by and performed by Tyler Bates, Paul Gutierrez; "100 Lullabies" by Shandra Beri, Pete Snell; "All The Kids Are Rockin'" by and performed by Bill White Ace; "Ball With Me Baby", "Doin' Time In The County Jail" by Dewey Terry, performed by Dewey Terry and the D. T. Express; "On the Range" by and performed by Paul Gutierrez; "Why Don't You Talk To Me No More?", "Completely Young" by Shandra Beri, Pete Snell, David Sutton, Bryn Mathieu performed by In Vitro; "You Left Me Standing" by Tyler Bates, Paul Gutierrez, performed by Pet
Dialogue Editors
Lauren Stephens
Walter Spencer
ADR Supervisor
Sarah Brady
Foley Editor
Doug Reed
Sound Mixer
Mark Weingarten
ADR Mixer
Eric Hoeschen
Foley Mixer
Emily Gaydos
Sound Recordists
Brian Smith
Sound Re-recording Mixers
John Brasher
Marty Hutcherson
Sound Transfers
Golden Gate Editorial
Sound Effects Co-ordinator
Gary Beal
Sound Effects Editors
Adriane Marfiak
Robert Berg
Foley Artists
Doug Reed
Technical Consultant
Gary Tieche
Stunt Co-ordinator
Bob Ivy
Marine Co-ordinator
Captain Jeff Johnson
Cast
Mickey Rourke
Florence
Stephen Baldwin
Leon
Sheryl Lee
Patty/Carol
Jason London
Tim
David Arquette
David
Jonah Blechman
Joe
J. Michael Hunter
Big John
Richard K. Olsen
Officer Duane
Sammy Kershaw
Officer Donny
Steve Alden
Officer Lyle
Michael Edelstein
Bank Manager
Jeff Gardner
Ken
Tom Hull
Gas Station Attendant
Amy Parrish
Sheila

John Henry Scott
Older Farmer
Paul Skemp
Younger Farmer
Emily Wachtel
Hairdresser

Suellen Yates
David's Mom

7,948 feet
88 minutes

Ultra stereo
in colour

La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1957. Three 18-year-olds, Tim, David and Joe, borrow David's father's Cadillac without permission and drive to the small Minnesota town of Caledonia. They plan to stage a practical joke with Tim being publicly 'shot' (with a blank) by David, bundled into the boot and driven off to a hideout where they can listen to radio reports of the ensuing rum-pus. But their arrival in Caledonia coincides with that of two genuine crooks, Florence and Leon, who've come to rob the bank. Since Leon and Tim are identically dressed in grey suit, grey fedora and shades, David and Joe kidnap Leon by mistake.

Florence catches Tim, scares the whereabouts of the hideout from him, and forces him to take Leon's role in the robbery. Tim kidnaps a young woman he takes for Florence's accomplice, Patty, but as they make off with the loot in her car she tells him she is Carol. Florence, before getting away in his own car, shoots the town deputy, Lyle. David's father, Big John, come to retrieve his Cadillac, is found standing over Lyle's body and arrested.

Leon meanwhile, released from the boot, holds David and Joe at gunpoint, ties them up and tortures them, suspecting them to be part of a double-cross by Florence. Tim and Carol, taking a short-cut to the hideout, are delayed by a puncture - and further delayed by Carol seducing Tim. Joe, who has managed to get loose and grab the gun, is about to shoot Leon when Florence turns up and kills him. Leon accuses Florence of deceiving him, but Florence talks him round - before stabbing him to death and shooting David. When Tim shows up Florence shoots but only wounds him, taunting Tim to kill him. Having finally nerved himself to kill Florence, Tim watches helplessly as "Carol" - who was really Patty all along - gets away with the loot just ahead of the cops.

La Crosse and Caledonia are where *Fall Time's* screenwriters, Paul Skemp and Steve Alden, respectively hail from, which accounts for the film's vivid sense of locality. But La Crosse is also the home town of Nicholas Ray and Joseph Losey, two film-makers closely attuned to the dark side of America's most outwardly complacent and inwardly disturbed decade. *Fall Time* isn't by any means the first film to explore the fears and repressions lurking behind the chlorophyll-toothpaste grin of the 50s - *Desert Bloom*, *Parents* and Joe Dante's recent *Matinee* all touched on the same territory - but few have done it more trenchantly, or with more glee.

The film - the screen debut of stage director Paul Warner - leads off with a wordless, black-and-white credit

sequence of the three crewcut young boys, Tim, David and Joe, leaping joyously into a swimming pool. This shot, epitomising a whole era of prelapsarian innocence, is reprised later in the film - besides being mirrored when the boys' older selves, jump from a high bridge into the Mississippi. The river at that point forms the border between Wisconsin and Minnesota and also, the trio believe, between boyhood and young manhood. As it turns out, the line they've crossed is a far more sinister one, a bourne from which at least two of these travellers won't return.

Even in the monochrome credit sequence, the idyll is already cracking round the edges: young David is savagely bawled out by his militaristic father, and Tim's mother, simpering down the backdoor steps with a birthday cake, trips and falls, splattering the cake across the backyard. Anger and violence hang in the air of these sleepy midwest townships. ("Boxing for the Lord" proclaims a billboard.) Most of the adult males seethe with suppressed fury, while the women retreat into bland domesticity. At several points during the action, as the torture and mayhem mount, we cut back to David's mother in her pastel kitchen. Floral aproned and faultlessly made-up, she impassively prepares a cherry pie, stepping back to admire the finished article as her son dies in a pool of blood.

Tim, David and Joe venture out of a safety zone, where violence means blank cartridges and bad Cagney impressions, into one where violence is real and insidiously compelling. Sex too takes on new and disturbing aspects. The unconscious homoerotic bond that links David and Joe is echoed in the lethal, sadistic relationship between the real bank raiders Florence and Leon, and Tim finds himself lusted after both by Florence, who threatens him with a knife while cooing seductively in his ear, and by the incognito criminal Patty who unceremoniously deflowers him in a ploughed field. In the final shot, now the sole survivor of the trio, Tim gazes bleakly into a future far less comfortable than any he ever imagined.

Not least of *Fall Time's* pleasures is something most of us had almost given up waiting for: a good performance from Mickey Rourke. Toning down his mannerisms - at least until the final bloodbath, where a touch of grand guignol is quite forgivable - he plays Florence with quiet fatalism, resigned to disaster even as he tries to forestall it. ("How come I gotta wear a noose?" demands Leon, objecting to his necktie. "We're all wearing one, get what I mean?" Florence responds patiently.) Along with the rest of the cast he sure-footedly negotiates the film's mix of moods, bringing to his scenes with Tim a wistful tenderness that effectively heightens their menace. Wry, witty and unsettling, *Fall Time* takes on major themes without ever slowing its pace or loosening its dramatic grip. Too bad, though, that they couldn't come up with a less anonymous title.

Philip Kemp

Free Willy 2

USA 1995

Director: Dwight Little

Certificate

U

Distributor

Warner Bros

Production Company

Warner Bros

Executive Producers

Richard Donner

Arnon Milchan

Jim Van Wyck

Producers

Lauren Shuler-Donner

Jennie Wel Tugend

Co-producer

Richard Solomon

Associate Producers

Mark Marshall

Douglas C. Merrifield

Sherry Fadley

Supervising Production Associate

David Eichler

Production Associate

Bruce Reutlinger

Production Supervisor

John Woodward

Unit Production Manager

Joe Kane

Location Manager

Patricia Fay

Mike Fantasia

2nd Unit:

Kim Kurumada

2nd Unit Directors

Michael McAlister

Conrad E. Palmisano

Assistant Directors

Jim Van Wyck

John Scotti

Lisa Satriano

Jayson Merrill

2nd Unit:

K.C. Hodenfield

Maggie Murphy

Bruce Reutlinger

Script Supervisor

P.R. Tooke

2nd Unit:

Robin Skelton

Miniature Unit:

Jeanne Byrd

Casting

Judy Taylor

Lynda Gordon

Screenplay

Karen Janszen

Corey Blechman

John Mattson

Based on Characters

created by Keith A.

Walker

Director of Photography

Laszlo Kovacs

2nd Unit Director of Photography

Gary Holt

Miniature Photography

Pete Romano

Hydroflex Camera

Operator:

Wayne Baker

Aerial Photography

Spacecam Systems Inc.

Camera Operator:

Ron Goodman

Underwater Photography

Pete Romano

Camera Operators

Joseph Thibo

2nd Unit:

Brian Glover

Dan Gold

Michael A. Jones

Steadicam Operator

Neal Norton

Opticals

Pacific Title

Visual Effects

Supervisors:

Michael McAlister

Kimberly K. Nelson

Editors:

Carole Kennealy

Mary Walter

Head of Production:

Mitzi Gallagher

Senior Digital Effects

Supervisor:

Brad Kuehn

Associate Producer:

Gig Gagnon

Composite Supervisors:

Kenneth Littlejohn

Lawrence Littlejohn

Digital Imaging

Manager:

Pat Repola

CG Animation

Supervisor:

Sean Schur

Digital Compositor:

Anita Marto

Digital Artists:

Sean O'Connor

Kevin Aratari

Joe Dubs

John Sasaki

CG Animators:

Fernando Benitez

Mark Brown

Sean Dever

Digital Effects Editor:

Shawn Broes

Digital Co-ordinator:

Michael S. Pryor

Digital Visual Effects Supervisors

Michael McAlister

Kimberly K. Nelson

Digital Artists

Sean O'Connor

Kevin Aratari

Joe Dubs

John Sasaki

Editors

Robert Brown

Dallas Puett

Graphics

Arthur Gelb

Production Designer

Paul Sylbert

Art Director

Gregory Bolton

Set Design

Mindy R. Toback

Design Consultant

Jeanette D'Ambrosio-

Sylbert

Set Decorator

Casey Hallenbeck

Production Illustrators

David Russell

Chris Buchinsky

Miniatures

Cinnabar California Inc

Special Effects Supervisor

Jon Belyeu

Special Effects

Richard Helmer

William Aldridge

Jay Bartus

Richard Bisetti

Michael Delgenio

Charles Hessey

Jeffrey Machit

Paul Sabourin

Harold Selig

John Ziegler

Whale Effects Supervisor

Walt Conti

Hydraulic/Electric Design

Ty Boyce

John Williams

Ed Roberts

Don Saxby

Jeff Weintraub

Ernie Ferrell

Mechanical Design

Greg Richards

Mitch Barham

Dan Adams

Alex Tilson

Rudy Maldonado

John McKeown

Ted Rogers

Mark Terzich

Tom Hsiu

Jay Doherty

Scott Riley

Ray Rodriguez

Paul Schnulle

Harry Stewart

Jim Harris

Ideo

Model Design

Rick Anderson

Dave Caldwell

Jonathan Horton

Stephanie Englert

John Titus

Mike Pendergast

Pieter Folkens

Sid Scroggin

John Siegel

Mark Wolfe

Mike Maxwell

Dan Pendergast

Chris Silverwood

Costume Design

Erica Edell Phillips

Costume Supervisor

Amy Stofsky

Make-up

Pamela Westmore

Whitney James

Hairstylists

Charlene Johnson

Chris Lee

Titles

Greenberg & Schluter

Opticals

Pacific Title

Music

Basil Pouldouris

Music Conductors

Shirley Walker

Basil Pouldouris

Orchestrations

Greg McRitchie

Music Scoring Producers

Tim Boyle

Songs/Music Extracts

"Childhood (Theme

from "Free Willy 2")

written and performed

by Michael Jackson;

"Forever Young" by Bob

Dylan, performed by

The Pretenders; "Forever

Young" by Bob Dylan,

performed by Robbie

Jackson; "I'll Say Good-

Bye for the Two of Us"

by Diane Warren,

performed by Exposé;

"Lou's Blues" by Nathan

Caveleri performed by

Nathan Caveleri Band;

"My Spirits Call Out"

by and performed by

K'aw Daa Gangaas

Supervising Sound Editors

Louis L. Edemann

Charles I. Campbell

◀ capture Willy and Luna and sell them as performing animals. Elvis tells the family and they unite against the oil company. Luna is released from a winch which has already removed her from the water and, through a series of slapstick manoeuvres, the plan to capture Willy is demolished. However, the oil spillage catches fire and when Jesse, Nadine (Randolph's god-daughter) and Elvis try to guide the beasts to safety, they become trapped. Nadine and Elvis are rescued by helicopter but Jesse looks lost until Willy rescues him. The family of whales escape the danger. Elvis hands Jesse a photograph of their mother which he had secretly kept for him.

● For this sequel the Schuler/Donner production team have replaced Australian director Simon Wincer with the unknown Dwight Little and acquired Laszlo Kovacs as director of photography. It avails them nothing as realistic films which rely on gathered documentary content have a problem wedding the real antics of undoubtedly impressive and intelligent creatures with those of a palpably less winning cast of humans.

The small school of whales in this ecological disaster movie retains its dignity despite being represented mostly by animatronic models and despite the attempts of the narrative to entrap them in a dramatic farrago involving the death of foster child Jesse's 'real' mother, the arrival of his half-brother Elvis, a teen romance with Native American girl Nadine, and the ecological threat of a massive oil spillage. Just as Willy has bonded with his lost family since his return to the ocean, so Jesse and Elvis overcome their initial reluctance to find common ground.

Randolph, Nadine's father, is there to embody a pre-lapsarian, pre-industrial past, and to set his seal on the all-too-easy defeat of corporate villainy. The creatures themselves are there for their spectacular value, but they also mediate Jesse's transition to adolescence. Nadine and Jesse draw emotionally closer through their delight in the whales' antics and later, Jesse's stepfather Glenn has a fatherly talk with Jesse, full of sexual misunderstandings.

Outside this family melodrama are the action-adventure sequences. These derive their strength not from the real-life drama of ecological damage, but from a quick fix of action involving fire and water, winchings to safety and miraculous survivals. The emphasis on action puts a brake on any but the most curt and obvious verbal exchanges between the characters. "Hey you guys, you alright?" serves most purposes.

This permits no one to make any kind of sense of what they see around them and simply wastes any potential interest the lives of those who man the tracking station might have for an audience. We still wait for that bold, timely and ecologically-informed film that will do more than simply pit city kids against the elements and decorate the edges with nature footage.

Verina Glaessner

Hold Me Thrill Me Kiss Me

USA 1992

Director: Joel Hershman

Certificate

18

Distributor

Art House Productions

Production Company

Mad Dog Pictures

Executive Producer

Martin Ira Rubin

Producer

Travis Swords

Supervising Producer

Alain Silver

Co-executive Producer

Bela Lehoczky

Production Associate

Richard Pierce

Production Co-ordinators

John Zinman

Unit Production Manager

Barbra Lopez

Location Manager

Dawn-Karen Thomas

Assistant Directors

Ross C. Day

Script Supervisor

Michael Proust

Director of Photography

Robin Allen

Editor

Steven R. Day

Costing

Susan J. Hellmann

Screenplay

Doreen Lane

Script Supervisor

Joel Hershman

Production Designer

Stephanie Abelman

Set Decorator

Kent Wakeford

Art Director

David Willis

Scenic Artist

Terry Whittaker

Costume Design

Tozar Simich

Make-up/Hair

Cathy Cooper

Title Design

Sean Young

Titles/Opticals

Bradley Bayon

Music

Van Der Veer Visual Effects

Music

Gerald Gouret

Music Performed by

Desafindo Trio

Vocals:

Ana Robles

Guitar:

Jorge Nazar

Percussion:

Casio Duarte

Music Supervisor

Kathryn Himoff

Music Editor

Dina Eaton

Songs

"Hold Me Thrill Me Kiss Me" by Harry Noble, performed by Mel Carter; "Girl Trouble", "I'm Free" by Gordon Gano, performed by Violent Femmes; "Where is My Mind?", "La La Love You" by Black Francis, performed by The Pixies; "Monster" by John Cote, Fred Schneider, performed by Fred Schneider;

"My Heart is a Flower"

by John S. Hall, David Rick, performed by King Missile; "U Li La Lu" by Frank Orrall, performed by Poi Dog Pondering; "She's On Drugs" by Pat Fish, performed by The Jazz Butcher; "Don't Push Me", "Dickweed" by and performed by Elvis Hitler; "Always Today" by and performed by The Honey Buzzards; "Dames, Boozie, Chains, and Boots" by Ivy Rorschach, Lux Interior, performed by The Cramps; "Rue Des Tempetes" by and performed by The Young Gods; "Who's to Blame" by Simone Lazer, Lee Martin, Tammy Hyler, performed by Tammy Hyler; "Calafia/Linda Mexicana" by and performed by Marcos Loya

Production Sound

Robert Sheridan

Dialogue Editor

Cheryl Boyce

ADR Editor

Sarah Brady

Foley Editors

Doug Reed

Sound Recordist

Heather Leavitt

Foley Mixer

Eric Gotthelf

Sound Re-recording Mixers

John Brasher

Sound Effects Editors

Eric Gotthelf

ADR Editor

Adriane Marfiak

Sound Re-recording Mixers

Todd Orr

Sound Effects Editors

Lauren Stephens

Stunt Co-ordinator

Bob Cota

Cast

Sean Young

Twinkle

Diane Ladd

Lucille

Adrienne Shelly

Dannie

Timothy Leary

Mr Jones

Max Parrish

Eli/Bud/Fritz

Andrea Naschak

Sabra

Bela Lehoczky

Lazslo

Ania Suli

Olga

Vic Trevino

Julio

Joseph Anthony Richards

Duane

Allan Warnick

Pet Mortician

Martha Shaw

Social Security Clerk

Frank Noon

Braindead Biker

Mary Lanier

Lucille's Mother

Bruce E. Morrow

Justice of the Peace

Jo Farkas

Justice's Wife

Toshi Toda

Asian Passenger

Cynthia Whitney
Waitress at Illusions
Travis Swords
Cop
John Auxier
Krush
Beauregard
Clock Buyer
George Ontiveros Jr
Tattoo Artist
Terri Laird
Tattooed Dancer
Robert Hoover
Illusions' Patron

Alain Joel Silver
Omar
Nicole Sassaman
Girl on a Leash
Gus the Dog
Himself
8,350 feet
92 minutes
Ultra stereo
In colour
Foto-Kem

● Burglar Eli Morrow meets a rich neurotic, Twinkle, while robbing her parents' house. After helping him take a large amount of cash, she bullies him into marrying her. At the altar, Eli refuses to go through with it even though Twinkle pulls a gun on him. They squabble and the gun goes off, apparently killing Twinkle.

While waiting in the small town of El Monte to meet Mr Jones, a fixer who can get him a fake passport, a drunken Eli is picked up by Sabra, a stripper, who takes him back to her trailer and leaves him handcuffed to her bed. In the morning, he is released by Dannie, Sabra's animal-loving sister. Mr Jones tells Eli his passport will be ready within six weeks. Returning to the trailer park, Eli befriends Dannie, who is a virgin because she doesn't want to do anything her sister does. When the jealous Sabra has Dannie's dog Gus put down, Dannie doses her chocolate milk with household solvents but has a change of heart. Sabra interrupts Dannie pouring the milk away and knocks her out with a frying pan. Sabra then chokes to death on the poisoned milk.

Dannie and Eli exchange confessions of accidental murders. They bury Sabra in Gus's grave at a pet cemetery and commence an affair. Eli's stash of money is discovered by Olga, an old Hungarian woman, and her grasping son Laszlo runs off with most of it. When he goes to pay off Mr Jones with the last of the money, Eli finds him dead and Twinkle, Jones' murderess, alive. Twinkle tries to kill Dannie but Eli shoots her again. Dannie then finishes Twinkle off and the lovers take a plane to Rio.

● "I guess killing your sister and burying your dog and losing your virginity all in one day is a lot for a girl," says Dannie. Although *Hold Me Thrill Me Kiss Me* is mainly smart and

funny, it's hard not to feel, from its gunplay-at-the-altar outset, that we've been here before.

This is one more in a parade of indie films (Barry Shils' *Motorama*, Abbe Wool's *Roadside Prophets*, Daniel Appleby's *Bound and Gagged: A Love Story*, John Dahl's *Red Rock West*) that can no longer be seen as simple rip-offs of obvious predecessors (David Lynch, John Waters, George Kuchar) but have to be considered as a genre of their own, one that is becoming almost as overpopulated as the Western was in the 50s and that endlessly recycles the same basic ingredients. This film displays many here, including a cool, but decent, rebel hero, colourful credits, alternative celebrity cameos (including Timothy Leary amongst others), a trailer trash backdrop, dayglo costumes and decors, small town weirdness, a stolen cash macguffin, well-chosen rock soundtrack, kinky sex and cosy callousness.

Max Parrish's Eli, a nice guy criminal with a decent streak belied by his feckless crookedness, and Adrienne Shelly's Dannie, an innocent waif who transforms amusingly but without much justification into a cold killer, are the supposed heart of the film. However, their love, first expressed when Eli buys her a baby seal tattoo (which Sabra sneers at as the wimpiest body adornment on record), hardly ignites the screen. Refraining mostly from *Wild at Heart*-cum-*Natural Born Killers* sex ("I don't want to be handcuffed for my first time"), the couple don't have that outlaws-on-the-run desperation and have to fall back on swapping stories about lost pets. Both players seem to be coasting on their handdog looks, although Shelly gets to glam up after she becomes a murderess.

El Monte, California, is populated by the usual indie movie crowd of eccentric loungers and deadbeats, but only Olga and her whining son intersect with the plot. Diane Ladd's irrelevant trailer queen is left with nothing much to do, and suggests some scenes trimmed along the way. Until her death, the film is stolen by Andrea Naschak's amazingly crass, vulgar and ghastly Sabra, a silicone slut seen gleefully dragging a dog off to the pound to die. Naschak's performance is so loathsome, indeed, that even Sean Young's rich bitch maniac is upstaged.

Kim Newman



Kiss-off: Sean Young, Max Parrish

Jason's Lyric

USA 1994

Director Doug McHenry

Certificate

18

Distributor

Rank

Production Company

PolyGram Filmed

Entertainment presents

A Jackson/McHenry

production

In association with

Propaganda Films

Executive Producers

Suzanne Broderick

Clarence Avant

Co-executive Producer

Marilla Ross

Producers

Doug McHenry

George Jackson

Executive in Charge of Production

Tim Clawson

Co-producers

Dwight Williams

Bobby Smith Jr

Associate Producer

Bill Carraro

Location Managers

Martha Pilcher

Tina Brawner

Post-production Supervisors

Glenn Kiser

Scott Carleton

Assistant Directors

Thomas Smith

Don Sparks

Michael Moore

Casting

Jaki Brown-Karman

Kimberly Hardin

Voice:

Barbara Harris

Screenplay

Bobby Smith Jr

Script Supervisor

Ira Hurvitz

Director of Photography

Francis Kenny

2nd Unit Director of Photography

John Newby

Camera Operators

Billy O'Drobina

Aerial:

Hans Bjerno

Philip Pastuhov

Steadicam Operator

Guy Bee

Editor

Andrew Mondshein

Production Designer

Simon Dobbin

Visual Consultant

Hope Goodwin

Art Director

David Lazan

Set Decorator

Tessa Posnansky

Set Dresser

Charles Scaife

Scenic Artists

Karl Gibbons

Barbra Falls

Storyboard Artist

Mark Bristol

Special Effects

Bob Williams

Costume Supervisor

Craig Anthony

Costume Consultant

Ruth Carter

Lyric Costume Concept

Jennifer Theard

Make-up

Judy Murdock

Special Make-up Effects

Phillip Nichols

Melissa Nichols

Hairstylist

Maxine Rennes-

Gunderson

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

Art Studio

Musik

Afrika

Matt Noble

Executive Music Producer

Ed Eckstine

Music Supervisor

Adam Kidron

Music Editor

Andrew Silver

Songs/Music Extracts

"No More Love" by

Michael Price, Dan

Walsh, Lavell Brown,

Lamar Lubin, Ontario

Haynes, John Rhone,

Maurice Stewart,

performed by DRS;

"Forget I was a

G" by Kenny

Whitehead, Larry Gold,

performed by The

Whitehead Brothers;

"If Trouble was Money"

by Albert Collins,

performed by Mint

Condition, Albert

Collins; "Up and Down"

by John Raimundi,

Tony Ortiz, William

Bush, performed by Jay

Quest; "That's How it Is

" by Ahmad A. Lewis,

Brian C. Walls,

performed by Ahamd;

"Little Girl Blue" by

Richard Rodgers,

Lorenz Hart, performed

by Caron Wheeler;

"Walk Away" by

Warren Griffin, Jamali

Carthorne, Danielle

Hollis, performed by

The Five Footer Crew,

G. Funk Era; "Just

Round Draft Pick" by

Warren Griffin,

Dewayne Williams,

Deon Williams,

performed by The

Twins, G Funk Era;

"Love is the Key" by

Quincy Jones III, p/k/a,

QDIII, Lord Spencer

Knobles, performed

by LSD; "Crazy Love"

by Van Morrison,

performed by Brian

McKnight; "If You

Think You're Lonely

Now" by Bobby

Womack, Patrick

Moten, Richard Griffin,

performed by K-Ci

Hailey of Jodeci; "Nigga

Sings the Blues" by R.

Green, G. Reed, S. Jones,

performed by Spice 1;

"Bring it On" by Joseph

Johnson, Brad Jordan,

P. Upchurch, D. Pow, R.

Powell, R. Evans,

performed by Geto

Boys, Houston All Stars;

"Love is Still Enough"

by Sovory, Mars Lasar,

performed by Sovory;

"Just Like My Papa"

by Dwayne Wiggins,

Raphael Wiggins,

performed by Tony!

Toni! Tone!; "Jesse

James" by Brad Jordan,

Joseph Johnson, Mike

Dean, performed by

Scarface; "Niggaz and

Bitches" by J. Savage,

W. Patterson, J. Mizell,

A. Pearyer, performed

by Jayo Felony; "This

City Needs Help" by

and performed by

Buddy Guy; "Rodeo

Style" by Chad Elliot,

Jamecia Bennett,

Michael Jackson, Herb

Middleton, performed

by Jamecia;

"Candyman" by

J. Smith, Chad Elliot,

performed by LL Cool J;

"Many Rivers to Cross"

by Jimmy Cliff,

performed by Oleta

Adams; "U Will Know"

by D'Angelo, Luther

Archer, performed by

Aaron Hall, After 7, Al

B Sure, Boyz II Men,

Brian McKnight,

Christopher Williams,

Damion Hall, D'Angelo,

DRS, El DeBarge, Gerald

Levett, H-Town, Intro,

JOE, Keith Sweat, Lenny

Kravitz, Lil Joe, Portrait,

R. Kelly, Silk, Sovory,

Stokley, Trevin

Campbell, Tony! Toni!

Tonel, Usher; "If

Trouble was Money"

by and performed by

Albert Collins; "Love

and Happiness, by Al

Green, Mabon Hodges,

"Let's Stay

Together" by Al Green,

Willie Mitchell, Al

Jackson Jne, performed

by Al Green; "I've Been

Loving You too Long"

by Otis Redding, Jerry

Butler, performed by

Otis Redding; "By the

Time I Get to Phoenix"

by Jim Webb,

performed by Isaac

Hayes; "Handle That

Shit" by Stevo, Scrap

Dog, Mr. Slic,

performed by Kinfolk;

"I Know I've been

Changed" (traditional),

"Jesus is Everything"

performed by Faith

Community Choir;

"By the Beautiful

Danube", "Roses from

the South" by Johann

Strauss Jr

Supervising Sound Design

David Knepper

True Sound

Supervising Sound Editor

David McMoyler

Foley Supervisor

Barney Cabral

Sound Mixers

David Yaffe

Music:

Tim Boyle

ADR Mixer

J.R. Westen

Foley Mixer

Tommy Goodwin

Foley Recordists

Dana Porter

Dean St John

Dolby stereo

consultant:

Thom Ehle

Sound Re-recordists

Patrick Cyconne

Ken Polk

Steve Agaloff

Tom Steel

Sound Effects Editors

Peter J. Lehman

Brian McPherson

Richard G. Morris

Amy Hoffburg

Foley Artists

Jeanne la Pucelle (Joan of Arc)

France 1994

Director: Jacques Rivette

Certificate
tbc

Distributor
Artificial Eye/
Mayfair Film

Production Company
Pierre Grise
production/La Sept
Cinéma/France 3
Cinéma

In association with
Centre National de
la Cinématographie
Canal +

Executive Producer
Pierre Grise

Producer
Martine Marignac

Associate Producers
Maurice Tran Trong
Tinchant
George Reinhart

Production Supervisor
Christian Lambert

Production Manager
Pierre Wallon

Unit Managers
Eric Grandjean
Yann Baude
Margot Luneau

Assistant Director
Dominique Arhex

Casting
Swan Pham
Lorraine Groleau

Screenplay
Christine Laurent
Pascal Bonitzer

Script Editor
Lydie Mahias

Director of Photography
William Lubtchansky

Camera Operator
Christophe Pollock

Editor
Nicole Lubtchansky

Production Design
Manu de Chauvigny

Set Design
Denis Cavalli

Chief Sculptor
Jean-Luc Schwarz

Sculptor
Hébert Désormière

Special Effects
Raph Salis

Costume Design
Christine Laurent

Armour
Jeanne Hervé Boutard
Charles VII's Hat
Philippe Model

Huques Coat of Arms
Anais

Make Up Supervisor
Jocelyne Lemery

Hair Supervisor
Annie Chretien-Hamon

Wigs
Françoise Fichet

Music/Music Director
Jordi Savall

Music performed by
Hesperion XX
Flute:
Pedro Memelsdorff
Cornet:
Jean Pierre Canihac
Viol:
Jordi Savall
Eunice Brandao
Sergi Casademunt
Markus Tapio
Trumpet:
Guy Ferber
Roland Callmar
Jean-Luc Machicot
Chalemies:
Alfredo Bernardini
Béatrice Delpierre
Michèle
Vanderbrouque
Sackbut:
Richard Cheetman
Daniel Lasalle

Philippe Lege
Thierry Durand
Lute:
Rolf Lislevand
Francis Biggi
Armin Janda
Organ:
Michael Behringer
Percussion/Tamborine/
Chimes:
Pedro Estevan
Michèle Claude
Jean Chamboux
Jean-François Piette
Bernard Heulin
Harp:
Andrew Lawrence-King
La Capella Reial de
Catalunya:
Yves Bergé
Laurence Bonnal
Josep Cabré
Lambert Climent
Jean-Louis Comoretto
Paolo Costa
Francesca Garrigosa
Jordi Gonzales
Josep M. Gregori
Jean-Yves Guerry
Pedro Ormazabal
Jordi Ricart
Xavier Sans
Benoit Thiviel

Music Extracts
"Osanna II, Sanctus"
by Guillaume Dufay;
"Rejois toy terre
de France"
(anonymous); "Vivat
Rex in aeternum"
(anonymous); "Marche
Royale"; "Te Deum";
"Sonnerie Royale Fin
Sacré"; "Fantaisie"; "La
Pucelle" by Jordi Savall

Sound
Florian Eidenbenz

Sound Editor
Chris Tullio-Atlan

Sound Mixer
Bernard Le Roux

Sound Effects
Pascal Chauvin
Patrick Egretau

Ecclesiastical Consultant
Etienne Andry

Equestrian Consultant
Mario Luraschi

Stunt Co-ordinator
Philippe Guégan

Cast
Sandrine Bonnaire
Jeanne la Pucelle
André Marcon
Charles, Dauphin
de France
Jean-Louis Richard
La Trémoille
Marcel Bozonnet
Regnault de Chartres
Patrick Le Mauff
Jean, Bâtard d'Orléans
Didier Sauvage
Raoul de Gaucourt
Jean-Pierre Lorit
Jean d'Alençon
Bruno Wolkowitch
Gilles de Laval
Pierre Baillet
Jacques Boucher
Mathias Jung
Jean Pasquereau
Quentin Ogier
Raymond
Stéphane Boucher
La Hire
Xavier Maly
Xaintrailles
Vincent Solignac
Pierre

Part I: Les Batailles
Tatiana Moukhine
Isabelle Romée

Jean-Marie Richier
Durand Laxart
Baptiste Roussillon
Robert de Baudricourt
Jean-Luc Petit
Henri Le Royer
Bernadette Girard
Catherine Le Royer
Jean-Claude Jay
Jacques Alain
Olivier Crueiller
Jean de Metz
Benjamin Rataud
Bertrand de Poulengy
Cyril Haouzi
Jean de Honnecourt
Reginald Huguenin
Colet de Vienne
Patrick Adomian
Richard l'archer
Nicolas Vian
Julien
Mathieu Bussan
Louis de Coutes
Bernard Sobel
Pierre de Versailles
Jérôme Nicolin
Guillaume Aimeri
Wilfred Benaïche
Mathieu Mesnage
Robert Lucibello
Seguin Seguin
Guy Martinez
Pierre Seguin
Guy Champrenault
Guillaume Lemaire
Jean-Pierre Becker
Jean d'Aulon
Martine Pascal
Yolande d'Aragon
Catherine Bidaud
Dame Boucher
Claire Bocat
Charlotte
Lydie Marsan
Hermine
Yann Baude
Ambleville
Thierry Boredeau
Le Basque

Part II: Les Prisons
Romain Lagarde
Nicolas
Florence Barel
Jeanne d'Orléans
Germain Rousseau
Dauphin's Confessor
François Chattet
Arthur de Richemont
Emmanuel de Chauvigny
Gros-Garrau

Part One: **Les Batailles**: 1455. The nun Isabelle Romée begins telling the story of her daughter Jeanne. 1429. Jeanne comes to the Dauphinist enclave of Vaucouleurs, to see Robert de Baudricourt, lord of the area. She hopes he will help her to see the Dauphin at Chinon; she claims divine visitations have told her she must defeat the English and Burgundians and restore the Dauphin to the throne of France. Baudricourt rebuffs her, but at last agrees to send his squire Jean de Metz to accompany her to Chinon. Jeanne cuts her hair in the style of a boy and dons armour. En route, Metz and his men talk of her sexually, but are won over by her purity.

At Chinon, Jeanne immediately recognises the Dauphin, and announces her attention of relieving the siege of Orléans. He promises her an army, but first she must undergo an inquest of faith by the church authorities at Poitiers. Near Orléans, Jeanne's army joins up with Dunois, the Bastard of Orléans. After seeing the results of a battle, Jeanne, horrified, prays for the English dead. May 7: as Jeanne's assault on the town gets under way, she is hit by an arrow and her forces retreat. She suffers a moment of doubt, but leads a

further charge, this time successfully.

Part Two: **The Prisons**: Jeanne tells Dauphin to come to Rheims, and he is crowned King Charles VII. Jeanne wants to lead her army in the attack on Paris, but now her saintly voices no longer instruct her. She is told that Charles is negotiating a truce with Philippe of Burgundy, which explains his reluctance to attack Paris. She leads the attack, but is wounded; she urges another assault, but learns that a treaty has been signed, and that further attempts to take Paris are forbidden. Her company disbands, some leaving to fight the English in Normandy.

Jeanne requests that she be allowed to join her old companion-in-arms the Duke of Alençon, but Charles refuses. May 1430. At the siege of Compiègne, Jeanne is defeated and surrenders to Burgundy's ally Jean de Luxembourg. In captivity, Jeanne is well treated by Jeanne de Luxembourg and her fellow noblewomen; they offer her a dress, which she refuses. She is visited by Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, who wants to see her in the hands of the Inquisition. November. Jeanne learns she is to be surrendered to the English, and makes a failed escape attempt. She is transferred to Rouen. May 31. Following months of trials, Jeanne is condemned as a heretic, but defends King Charles from the same charge. She agrees to abjure her claims to divine guidance, and her punishment - burning at the stake - is commuted to life imprisonment. She returns to woman's clothing, but after rape attempts by English soldiers, she resumes male attire. For this crime, she is condemned to die at the stake.

Medievalism - as a field of study rather than a stylistic school - occupies a privileged position as a touchstone of French cinema, to which directors repeatedly return as if to a point of origin. The Middle Ages have come to signify the moment of the invention of Frenchness, in the same way that British cinema has privileged the nineteenth century of Austen and Dickens as its holy fount. Bresson in *Lancelot du Lac*, Carné in *Les Visiteurs du soir*, Tavernier in *La Passion Béatrice*, Rohmer in *Perceval le Gallois*, not to mention the expatriate Borowczyk of *Blanche* - all have paid homage (or should that be pilgrimage?) to the Middle Ages as the source of a particular kind of iconographic and narrative richness, and of a visual and verbal austerity without which medieval film narrative seems unthinkable.

Jacques Rivette's two-part film follows in this tradition, and carries its several cultural burdens extremely lightly. Not only does it have to slough off the ideological weight that the extreme right have attached to the figure of Jeanne la Pucelle, but above all any modern Jeanne must inevitably walk in the shadow of the previous versions by Dreyer, Bresson and, to a less sanctified degree, Preminger. Rivette's would seem at first sight to present the most monolithic version of the story - the four hours of this British release

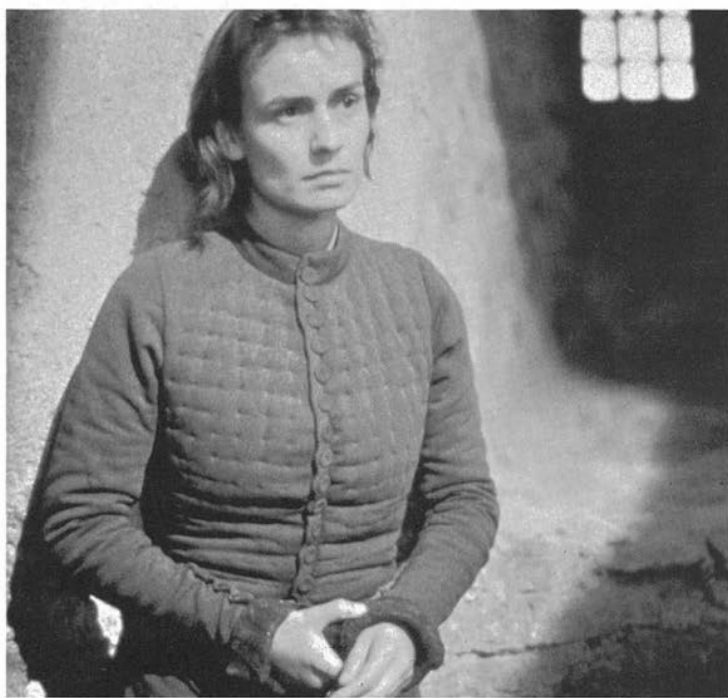
are cut down from an original six. But, as always with Rivette, duration is never the authoritarian imposition of a grand order, but the invitation to a heightened consciousness of time's passing: as ever, he is concerned with preparation, waiting, the space between events, dead time.

Rivette has claimed that this version of Jeanne is concerned with the moments "between": what happens between Vaucouleurs, where she launches her career, and Rouen, where she ends it. What we in fact see - as the titles of the two sections prosaically suggest - is the rise and fall in Jeanne's curriculum vitae. The approach is so pragmatic that it might have been called *Jeanne: A Career*; and indeed *Jeanne la Pucelle* is as matter of fact about the soldier's business (and this Jeanne is definitely a soldier before she is a saint) as *La Belle Noiseuse* was about the daily painterly rigmarole of scraping pencils and scrapping canvases.

This history is stylised to a degree, but the explicitly theatrical effect we have learned to expect from Rivette is absent. Instead he takes us not onto the stage of history but backstage - to its green room. Jeanne's story is above all one of rehearsal; in the opening scenes at Vaucouleurs, she paces back and forth across a nondescript courtyard as the camera tracks her intently. We learn early on not to expect historical spectacle: Jeanne's hostess at Vaucouleurs watches her through a keyhole, and is amazed by what she is doing - precisely nothing. We can imagine, in fact, that Jeanne is learning her lines for the part she at last gets to dress for.

Jeanne is not belittled but certainly humanised by this sense of play-acting: throughout her career, she's consummately aware of her role. Later, challenged about her transformation into a 'boy', she responds, "I took the dress which applied to my task." She is aware both of the requirements of her business and of the image which goes with it. Sandrine Bonnaire is a particularly acute choice for the part: one of France's most recognisable actresses, she embodies a star status at a distance from the mainstream, with the edge of anti-glamour non-conformity and rebel-next-door ordinariness which she has retained from Pialat's *À nos amours* and Varda's *Sans toit ni loi* (*Vagabonde*). Jeanne too is a star in her ordinariness, and her career is founded as much on charisma as on her intrepidity and determination as a soldier. Her moment of crisis comes when she attempts to take Paris, only to find that her aura as well as her voices have deserted her: a star on the wane, she has overshot her career.

The matter-of-factness of Rivette's treatment makes *Jeanne la Pucelle* in a very subtle way a commentary on the nature of historical destiny, which would explain the apparently risky choice of a subject which would appear to be desperately overworked. The film is an attempt at once to disengage Jeanne from the 'glamour' of her posterity and to imagine how tenuously



A siege too far: Sandrine Bonnaire

constructed that glamour was. Jeanne is an actress for whom there are two scripts. One is the posthumous script of history, of that history's fictional retellings and of the chronicle versions Rivette draws on (he pays particular attention to the eye-witness testimonies presented in 1456, which led to Jeanne's rehabilitation). The second one is the projective script, the prophecy of her fate, which Jeanne carries in her head, supposedly dictated by her saintly voices.

Rivette's great departure is to ask what happens when that script runs out: Jeanne's moment of crisis comes before her assault on Paris, as she asks herself, "Maintenant quoi?" She knows she has overshot the allotted trajectory of her career; this is the moment at which the career must end and posterity begin. In a sense, it is also the moment at which the film becomes truly Rivettian: "Maintenant quoi?" is the question we inevitably end up asking as we find ourselves caught in his narratives' waiting games.

Jeanne la Pucelle is most unlike a Rivette film if we are expecting the modernist fragmentation of *Céline et Julie vont en bateau* or his theatrical fantasia *La Bande des quatre* (1989). It does, however, revisit the claustrophobic tableau space of his 1965 film *Suzanne Simonin, la religieuse de Denis Diderot*, and Jeanne could be said to be an avatar of Suzanne. Both are 'martyred' women, at odds with the expectations surrounding their sexual and social identity, although Jeanne achieves a public destiny that is denied Suzanne.

Another Rivettian constant is the fact that Jeanne is very literally concerned, as all Rivette films figuratively are, with the conquest of spaces, both by characters and by the camera. Here Rivette concentrates on spaces outside – the camps, the walls of besieged cities, the ante-chambers where business goes on as usual. Most notable in this decerebralising history is the scene in

which the treasurer of Orléans calculates the cost of resisting the siege, doling out ducats as he tots up the figures; it's the film's most self-reflexive moment, a reminder that the making of history, like the making of movies, has to be accounted for.

In its visual presentation, *Jeanne la Pucelle* may appear to stretch the prosaic to an extreme – unlike *Blanche*, for example, which reduced its visual stimuli only to stylise them into the hieratic effect of mediaeval illustration. But the sense of tableau emerges in the 15-minute coronation scene, presented as a ritual that takes its own speed, and that quite drastically disrupts the flow of the film. It presents such ritual moments – the moments we commonly recognise as historical event – as interruptions, moments expressly lifted out of time. The image here is perfectly transparent, *tel quel*, presented as if it were a neutral recording of the event: yet it is ambivalent. We can read it at once as if this were literally the way the event might have happened, and at the same time as a pared-down theatrical abstraction of what we imagine a coronation to be.

The most telling shot is of a sparse group of onlookers worldlessly, uncomfortably, craning over a police line of guards to watch the event. It makes us wonder who they are, these excluded rubberneckers, and it makes us aware of a particular world order that dominates the film: a world ruled by ceremonial and political protocol, but scarcely populated. Where indeed are the subjects ruled by these warring factions; who are the people who comprise these abstracted nations of France and Burgundy? Absent, of course: at home, watching through barn doors, where they see that nothing is happening. Jeanne la Pucelle's importance is that she is of their number: a player from the crowd, with a brief but explosive walk-on part.

Jonathan Romney

Judge Dredd

USA 1995

Director: Danny Cannon

Certificate

15

Distributor

Guild

Production Company

Cinergi Pictures

Executive Producers

Andrew G. Vajna

Edward R. Pressman

Producers

Charles M. Lippincott

Beau E.L. Marks

Associate Producers

Tony Munafo

Susan Nicoletti

Production Associate

Mary Lou Devlin

Production Co-ordinator

Kate Garbett

Production Managers

Margaret Adams

Iceland:

Snorri Orisson

Unit Manager/Location Manager

Simon McNair Scott

Post-production Co-ordinator

Rebecca Hilliard

2nd Unit Director

Beau Marks

Assistant Directors

Chris Newman

Bernard Bellew

Sallie Anne Hard

Ben Howarth

Leifur B. Dagfinnsson

Byars Cole

Script Supervisor

Sheila Wilson

Casting

Jackie Burch

Iceland:

Leifur B. Dagfinnsson

UK:

Lucy Boulting

Screenplay

William Wisher

Steven E. de Souza

Story

Michael De Luca

William Wisher

Based on the *Judge*

Dredd comic characters

by John Wagner,

Carlos Ezquerro

Director of Photography

Adrian Biddle

Visual Effects Photography

David K. Stewart

Motion Control Camera Operators

Harry J. Alpert

David R. Hardberger

Dwayne McClintock

Live Action:

Erick Swenson

High Speed Director of Photography

William Neil

Matte Photography

John Grant

Camera Operators

David Worley

Ian Foster

Special Visual Effects

Mass. Illusion

Supervisor:

Joel Hynek

Producer:

Diane Pearlman

Art Director:

Robert U. Taylor

Production Manager:

Maria Criscuolo

Post-production

Supervisor:

Joan Collins

2nd Supervisor:

B. David Green

Production

Co-ordinators:

Kevin Elam

Mara Bryan

Shuttle

Crash/Pyrotechnic

Producer:

Tim Goldberg

Editor:

Jennifer Wollan

Layout Supervisor:

Larry Platrik

Digital Visual Effects

Supervisor/Software Design

Serge Sretschinsky

Senior Digital Visual Effects

Animators

Nicholas Brooks

Deborah Wiltman

Pre-visualisation

Supervisor:

Colin Green

Designers:

Micheal Schmitt

Peter Oberdorfer

Daniel Leung

Daniel L. Smith

Mechanical Effects

Supervisor

Kelly Kerbey

Special Optical Effects

Pacific Title And Art

Studio

Matte Paintings

Magic Camera

Company

Artist:

Doug Ferris

Graphics

Alex Rutherford

Computer Animation

Kleiser-Walczak

Construction Company

Supervisors:

Jeff Kleiser

Diana Walczak

Executive Producer:

Anezka Sebek

Head of Software:

Frank Vitz

Lead Animators:

Eileen O'Neill

Randy Bauer

Editors

Alex Mackie

Harry Keramidas

Associate Editor

Peter Elliot

Production Designer

Nigel Phelps

Supervising Art Director

Les Tomkins

Art Directors

Kevin Phipps

Don Dossett

Action Vehicle:

David Allday

Set Decorator

Peter Young

Conceptual Artists

Julian Caldwell

Matthew Codd

Chris Halls

Kevin Walker

Simon Murton

Braughtsmen

Peter Russell

Storyboard Artists

Robbie Consing

John Greaves

Sculptures

Allan Moss

Keith Short

Roy Rodgers

Special Effects/ABC Robot

Supervisor

Joss Williams

Special Effects

Administrator:

Michael Dawson

Senior Design

Engineer/ABC Robot

System Design:

Brian Morrison

Flying Wire Supervisor:

Bob Weisinger

Mechanical Effects

Supervisor

Kelly Kerby

Pyrotechnics

Thaine Morris

Model Designers

Kent Mikalsen

Mark Morgenstein

Model Shop Supervisor

Eric Chamberlain

Key Modelmakers

David Merritt

Daijiro Ban

Stephen Thurn

Costume Design

Emma Porteous

Judge Dredd Armour:

Gianni Versace

Wardrobe Supervisor

Patrick Wheatley

Make-up/Prosthetics

Supervisor

Nick Dudman

Mean Machine Special

Make-up Effects

Chris Halls

Chief Hairstylist

Colin Jamison

Title Design

Susan Bradley

Music

Alan Silvestri

Music Performed by

Sinfonia of London

Music Conductor

Alan Silvestri

Orchestrations

William Ross

Executive Music Producer

Steven E. Machat

Music Supervisors

Barry Levine

Eric Harryman

Music Editor

Kenneth Karman

Songs

"The Dredd Song" by

Smith, Gallup,

Bamonte, Cooper,

O'Donnell,

performed by The Cure;

"Darkness Falls" by

Matt Johnson,

performed by The The;

"Need Fire" by and

performed by Cocteau

Twins; "Supercharger

Heaven" by White

Zombie, Rob Zombie,

performed by White

Zombie; "Release the

Pressure" performed by

Leftfield

Sound Design

Leslie Shatz

Dialogue Editors

Patrick Dodd

Richard Quinn

ADR Editor

David A. Cohen

Foley Editor

E. Jeanne Putnam

Sound Mixers

Chris Munro

Music:

Dennis Sands

Foley Recordists

Richard Duarte

Jim Pasque

Dubbing Recordist

Phillip Rogers

Sound Re-recording Mixers

Michael Minkler

Leslie Shatz

Sound Effects Editors

◀ penal term.

At the penal colony, a psychotic former Judge, Rico, murders the governor and escapes from his force field cell. Soon a television journalist campaigning against the high-handed methods of the Judges is murdered, apparently by Judge Dredd. The weapon used, a "Lawgiver", is encoded with Dredd's DNA. Dredd is arrested and put on trial by the Council of Judges led by Dredd's mentor Judge Fargo. Hershey defends him well, but the DNA evidence proves decisive. The only way that Dredd's sentence can be reduced from death to penal servitude is by Fargo retiring and asking for the reduced sentence as a final request. Retirement for Judges means exile to the wasteland known as the Cursed Earth.

Dredd is chained into the same transport as Fergie, which is then shot down over the Cursed Earth by a renegade gang. Dredd and Fergie survive the crash but are taken prisoner. Fargo rescues them but is fatally wounded in the attempt. Before dying, Fargo tells Dredd that he is not a natural born human but the result of the Janus project, a genetic experiment to produce the perfect Judge, and that the renegade Rico is his cloned brother. Back at Mega City One, the new Chief of Council, Judge Griffin, is in league with Rico. A campaign of sabotage leads to the slaughter of dozens of Judges giving Griffin enough leverage to force the Council to agree to revive the Janus project to re-man the Judiciary.

Dredd and Fergie break back into Mega City One and attack the Council headquarters. They chase Rico to the Janus experiment laboratories where, with his henchwoman Ilsa, Rico begins cloning new warriors from his own DNA rather than the original prototype. In the ensuing battle, the laboratory is destroyed and Rico falls to his death. Afterwards, Dredd is offered the leadership of the Council but he declines, stating that he will always be a "street Judge".

● The context for discussion of *Judge Dredd* in the British media has been almost exclusively a matter of tribal enthusiasms, as if the majority audience for this film will be made up of diehard fans of the comic *2000 AD* on which the film is based. This is, of course, unlikely; no cult audience could generate the returns the producers of a big budget (reported as \$80 million) film of this kind need for success. Yet this same yardstick of authenticity has also been used to measure *Tank Girl* and *Batman Forever*, both of which have been deemed to fall short of their origins. It is one of the peculiarities of the current critical passion for pop culture that snobbery is inverted: few critics argue these days that a Joseph Conrad or an E. M. Forster adaptation should be strictly true to the book, but if a comic strip is substantially reworked, it denounced as a violation.

Judge Dredd the movie is in any case an effective visual realisation of the comic strip which spawned it. The strip's urban terrain, Mega City One, is

here seen as an entirely apt ad-hoc assemblage of cinematic influences, including *Metropolis*, *Ben Hur*, *El Cid* and *Blade Runner*, an anarchic upward sprawl of gleaming towers. The objects within it – the Judges' epaulette-heavy uniforms, their weapons and vehicles – are also suitably iconic. If, in imitating comic strips, cinema's dystopias are beginning to look more alike, no-one who has read a lot of comics will be surprised; it's a medium so voracious that few science fiction ideas are fresh to its readers. In that sense, imagined futures are now self-generating feedback systems: movies scavenge from the comic books which in turn scavenge from movies. The film's youthful British director, Danny Cannon, proves himself to be a natural builder of such hybrids and he is reasonably well served by the script for the first 40 minutes or so.

The reins of *auteur* power on this particular movie, however, were undoubtedly shared with Cannon's star Sylvester Stallone. No-one can doubt that a movie version of Dredd needs a star of Stallone's magnitude and he embodies a suitably implacable, thoroughly new Judge Dredd with some panache. What eventually sinks the narrative, however, is the insistence on providing him with a romantic foil, Diane Lane's Judge Hershey. Stallone does his best to begrudge Hershey's insinuations into his life but, coupled with his unlooked for anxiety about his test tube origins, her presence seems to imply that Dredd is an agonised candidate for therapy.

Here's where the comic book fan's complaints are more telling. Stallone's triumphant removing of his helmet, shifting the focus from those much-vaunted crooked lips, may be an act of self-confident freedom from the comic book. But the consequence of the new-found Dredd's emotional depth is that he can easily be dismissed as just another cop with a unspoken beef about the dehumanising effects of the job (as if he were in *NYPD Blue*) when the whole point about Mega City One is that *everyone* is dehumanised.

Once the strategy to make Dredd a person becomes clear, then the nihilism and quirkiness so cleverly established at the beginning recedes, and the struggle for control of a lawless city is superseded by Dredd's quest to redefine himself. This leaves Stallone in need of a more cathartic and satisfying antagonist than Armande Assante as his ranting brother clone Rico. Assante seems happy to join the very British line of villainy that might be called the Blofeld school of blowhard. He's like a *muy macho* Malcolm MacDowell or Keith Allen and he leads Dredd towards a finale that is worthy of James Bond: an exploding lab which fails to complete the making of a single Rico clone. By destroying his brother, Dredd can truly stand alone without any blood ties to the society which he must police. However, the movie Judge Dredd has only himself to blame if he is haunted by his comic book shadow.

Nick James

Martha & Ethel

USA 1993

Director: Jyll Johnstone

Certificate

U

Distributor

Columbia TriStar

Production Company

Canobie Films

Producer

Jyll Johnstone

Co-producer

Barbara Ettinger

Associate Producers

Gretchen McGowan

Christina Houlihan

Consulting Producers

Lance Bird

Amy Shewell

German Co-ordinating

Producer

Monica Clark

Post-production Supervisor

Susan Lazarus

Writers

Alysha Cohen

Barbara Ettinger

Christina Houlihan

Jyll Johnstone

Frank Ortega

Sharon Woods

Director of Photography

Joseph Friedman

Additional Photography

Buddy Squires

Alyson Denny

Craig Spirko

Editor

Toby Shimin

Associate Editor

Alysha Cohen

Title Photographs

Stephany Berger

Title/Card Design

Maxine Boll

Titles

Larry Q. Animation

DuArt Film Labs

Opticals

Mel Wolpin/VideArt

Additional Music By and

Performed By

Sarah Franklin

John Casey

Music Producer

Tim Gennert

Songs/Music Extracts

"Lou Ann" by and

performed by Phil

Aaberg; "Ojo" by and

performed by Leo

Kottke; "Solo Concerts

Bremen/Lausanne"

by and performed by

Keith Jarrett; "I Ain't

Got Nobody" by

Spencer Williams,

performed by Fats

Waller; "Bushel And A

Peck" by Frank Loesser;

"Happy Birthday To

You" by Mildred Hill,

Patty Hill; "Pearline"

by and performed by

Eddie J. Son House Jnr;

"Hotcha Razz-Ma-Tazz"

by Irving Mills, Andy

Razaf, performed by

Cab Calloway; "Harlem

On Saturday Night"

by Freddie Brown,

Shepard N. Edmonds,

Freddie Johnson, Chris

Smith, performed by

Lil Hardin Armstrong;

"In The Mood" by Joe

Garland, performed

by The Kit McClure

Band; "Solang noch

Untern Linden"

performed by Edith

Schollwer, Bruno Fritz,

Groäes Tanz and Revue

Orchester; "Society

Ball" by Dan Kirsten;

"Flying High" by Joe

McDonald, performed

by Country Joe and the

Fish; "God Bless The

Child" by Billie

Holiday, Arthur Herzog

Jnr, performed by Billie

Holiday; Additional

Bach and Chopin

selections performed

by Judith Gordon

Sound Editors

Mary Ellen Porto

Associate:

Julie Lindner

Sound Mixer

John D. McCormick

Sound Re-recording Mixer

Rick Dior

Additional Sound

John Murphy

Kate Davis

Kim Harvey

Chonk Moonhunter

Victoria Stepitova

Curtis Choy

Foley Engineer

Paul Zydel

Consultant

Joanie Bronfman

Research Co-ordinator

Frank Ortega

Film Extracts

All About Eve (1950)

Mädchen in Uniform

(1931)

Cast

Ruth Fuglistaller

Martha's Voice-over

6.995 feet

77 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour



Reclining years: Ethel

bers of the families they served, as well as supplying details of Martha and Ethel's own lives.

Martha, who imported a strict German discipline to the Johnstone household, is described in loving terms, although the children were often frightened of her. Ethel, on the other hand, is spontaneously affectionate, a 'natural' mother. She continues to live, as an employee, with Mrs Ettinger in Connecticut, although both she and the family acknowledge that the relationship they share is difficult to define. At the end of the film, each family make an effort to embrace the backgrounds of their respective surrogate mothers. Martha visits her home town and is fêted like a returning heroine. On her return, the Johnstones are concerned that Martha is becoming infirm and that, consequently, life alone in her New York apartment will become arduous. One of the daughters arranges for her to move to California, close to her. The Ettingers take Ethel to visit her younger, 86-year-old sister and relatives. We see photographs that Barbara Ettinger has taken of Ethel. A further sequence of photographs, which includes one of Martha and Ethel together, concludes the film.

● Over the course of this intensely personal and affectionate documentary, certain questions become increasingly insistent. What about Martha and Ethel's own lives, one wants to ask. And, for that matter, what about the children these feisty, vivacious, octogenarian spinsters never had? These are difficult questions. One of the most revealing moments of the film shows Martha in her New York apartment, introducing her teddy bears and rag dolls as her children. But Martha and Ethel, after all, have been surrogate mothers to a cumulative 11 children. "You don't have to bear children to love them," says Ethel at one point, and Martha and Ethel are, in turn, well-loved and cared for. Each child and each parent has a relationship to each nanny respectively. Ethel, who receives Mother's Day cards from 'her' children is now a working companion to Mrs Ettinger, a salaried family friend.

Salaried friend? No wonder an infant Ettinger is surprised to discover that Ethel has a different surname. Another describes her momentary sense of

betrayal and confusion upon learning that her nanny is a paid hand. Both sets of parents, caught up in the social whirl of their milieu, had passed day-to-day responsibilities to the nannies. What price, one might ask, does love command?

But such questions are unanswerable and it is to the credit of director Jyll Johnstone and her co-producer, Barbara Ettinger, that this film offers no simplistic analyses of the nannies. *Martha & Ethel* is a slowly revealing film, punctuated with a humour born of careful editing. It is concerned to trace the marks that these two women have made on their 'families' lives, and to contextualise them within points of Martha and Ethel's own experience. This is done with a deft touch. An adult Johnstone child talks about being beaten with a wooden spoon by Martha; archival footage, from *Mädchen in Uniform*, illustrates Martha's training environment, and she speaks about her own childhood spankings, administered by, yes, a wooden spoon. Mrs Johnstone, a Monaco-born former concert pianist who was adopted by American parents, speaks of the child's need for discipline, and one is aware that her own security – with its concomitant requirements for an identifiable framework within which to manoeuvre – may be on the agenda. Further film clips portraying 50s advertisements about how the ideal wife should behave expand upon the social context of the mother's life. Despite Martha's Germanic approach to child-rearing, it is interesting, indeed moving, that some decades after leaving her homeland, she is still only able to whisper Hitler's name.

One is left with a film that produces its own weave of relationships and ties. Johnstone's historical context is never reductionist and the personalities of her interviewees are strongly represented. Above all, Martha and Ethel come across as courageous women, whose attachment to children knows no racial or national divide. But the issue of employee, or even chattel, status never really vanishes. Mrs Ettinger relates packing kids, luggage and Ethel into the station wagon during her and Mr Ettinger's divorce. There is a nagging feeling that, given the confusion between master, servant, mother and friend roles, that this is possibly *Driving Miss Daisy* writ large. Johnstone is unflinching on these subjects. Certainly, the family environments of the Ettingers and Johnstones represent a particular social class in a particular economic climate. In her portrayal of these two women, the differences of race and nationality are barely mentioned. Some may consider this a grave oversight. But then *Martha & Ethel* is not a hectoring film, merely an honest and touching attempt to represent a series of relationships and commemorate the extraordinary love that characterised them. Given Britain's own propensity towards a nanny culture, this film will undoubtedly speak to several generations here.

Louise Gray

Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie

USA 1995

Director: Bryan Spicer

Certificate

PG

Distributor

20th Century Fox

Production Company

A Saban Entertainment/Toei Company production

Producers

Haim Saban
Shuki Levy
Suzanne Todd

Co-producer

David Coatsworth

Production Supervisor

2nd unit:

Michael Levine

Production Co-ordinators

Sharon Miller

US:

Anthony Allegre

Unit Co-ordinators

Michael Lippold

2nd Unit:

Basia Plachecki

Production Manager

Australia:

Sue Wild

Unit Production Manager

David Coatsworth

Unit Managers

Chris Jones

Rick Kornaat

2nd Unit:

Paul Malane

James Hopwood

Location Manager

Peter Lawless

2nd Unit Directors

Gary Hymes

Ooze Fight:

Jeff Imada

Assistant Directors

Steve Love

Christopher Dow

Michael Mercurio

Noni Roy

Harriet Spalding

2nd unit:

Colin Fletcher

David Rose

James McTigue

Karen Mahood

Michael Sparks

Stefan Laguna

Casting

Australia:

Liz Mullinar

Consultants

Christine King

Original Series:

Katy & Co

Screenplay

Arne Olsen

Story

John Kamps

Arne Olsen

Script Supervisors

Kate Dennis

Victoria Sullivan

Director of Photography

Paul Murphy

2nd Unit Director of Photography

Ian Jones

Plate Unit Photography

Steven Newman

Miniature Photography

Michael O. Sajbel

VCE Effects Photography

William Conner

Optical Photography

Greg Johnson

Camera Operators

David Williamson

Andre Fleuren

Tracey Kubler

Calum McFarlane

2nd Unit:

Brian Breheny

Gary Phillips

Katherine Mills

Motion Control:

Steve Switaj

Eric Swenson

Steadicam Operators

Ian McMillan

Philip M. Cross

Visual Effects

VFX

Supervisors:

Erik Henry

Richard Hollander

Co-ordinator:

Steve Dellerson

Ramrod:

Gig Rackauskas

Editor:

Kathy Chasen-Hay

Storyboard Artist:

Gary Thomas

Producers:

Jennifer Bergman

Scott Peterson

Ooze Team Supervisor

John (D.J.) Desjardin

3rd Act Team Supervisor

Antoine Durr

Digital Compositing

Cheryl Budgett

Unit Production Manager

Dean Foster

Tony Noel

Kris Gregg

Reid Baker

Digital Effects

Digital Magic

Designer:

Rich Thorne

Producer:

Rodney Montague

Technical Supervisor:

Jeff Pierce

Composer:

Brian Hanable

Riotscoping:

Heidy Lukas

Marc Scott

Joe Mandia

3-D

Animation/Morphing:

John 'Moose' Musumeci

Co-ordinator:

Sharon Holly

3-D Animation:

Spencer Knapp

VCE:

Michael Aguilar

OCS/Freeze Frame/Pixel

Magic:

Supervisor:

Raymond E. McIntyre Jr

Artist:

Charlie Tang

Sessums Engineering

Head Design:

Jack Sessums

Unit Line Producer:

Gary Maxwell

Opticals

Optical Illusions Inc

Jeff Matakovich

Effects Producer:

Leigh Rahl

Editor:

Georgie Huntington

Co-ordinator:

Joni Waller

Matte Artists

Karen deJong

Tim Donahue

Alison Yerxa

Animation

John Bermudes

Valentina Morzova-Carr

Sylvia Keulen

Marc Rubone

Stokes/Kohne

Associates

Wolf Drum Imaging

Executive Producer:

John Ornelas Jr

Producer:

Bob Robbins

Key Frame

Animation/Technical

Supervisor:

Daniele Colajacomo

Key Frame Animator:

Eric Daniels

Motion Capture

Animation:

George T. Karl

Model Sculptor:

Eduardo Batres

Production

Co-ordinator:

L. Rhiannon Lefanta

Editor

Wayne Wahrman

Production Designer

Craig Stearns

Art Directors

Colin Gibson

2nd Unit:

Prisque Salvi

Set Design

William Passmore

Lord Zedd's Castle/Alpha 5

based on designs by

Yuda Ako

Set Decorator

Tim Ferrier

Set Dressers

Tara Kamath

Lon Lucini

Conceptual Artists

Theodore Van Doorn

Eric Brown

Tim Flattery

Draftsmen

Axel Bartz

Ian Robinson

Scenic Artists

Peter Collias

Ian Richter

Billy Malcolm

Storyboard Artist

Richard Newsome

Sculptures

Tony Lees

Guido Helmssetter

Special Effects Supervisor

Tad Pride

Special Effects Co-ordinator

Steve Courtney

Special Effects

Richard O. Heimer

Ivan Ooze/Bone

Creature/Gatekeepers

Creature Effects

Studio Kite

Designer:

Warren Beaton

Technical Supervisor:

Steven Rosewell

Art Director:

Vikki Kite

Alpha 5/Saba Effects

Global Effects

Alpha 5 Design:

Chris Gilman

Sculptor:

Conor McCullagh

Tengu Warriors/

Lord Zedd Effects

Optic Nerve Studios

Goldar/Mordant Effects

Criswell Productions

Creature Operators

Chris Koranek

Robin Sherwood

Costume Design

Joseph Porro

Power Rangers

Suits/Helmets:

Sticks & Stones

Rob Burman

Jennifer E. McManus

Costume Supervisor

Sanja Hays

Make-up/Hair Supervisor

Lynn Wheeler

Pacific Title

Music

Graeme Revell

Original Television

Themes:

Shuki Levy

Kussa Mahchi

Ron Wasserman

Music Performed by

West Australian

Symphony Orchestra

Music Conductor/

Orch



Ooze a pretty boy then: Paul Freeman

◀ noble forces of journalism worldwide have battled to generate column inches on the topic of cartoon and comic book characters being translated into feature film formats. *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* – in both the movie version and the television series – has been sucked into this maelstrom of genre building and containment. Have the Rangers colluded with the powers of darkness? Or are they really victimised refugees, unfairly huddled together with the likes of *Tank Girl*, *Judge Dredd*, *Batman*, and *Casper* who truly deserve blame for this morass of merchandising and opinion forming? The answer, with caveats, is yes to both questions: the transition to feature film has blotted out some of the charms of the original format, but the *Power Rangers* phenomenon remains intrinsically different from the comic-book-to-film ventures mentioned above.

Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie had a fundamentally different genesis. It isn't based on a comic book or an animated cartoon, but on a popular children's television show. This is a crucial fact in understanding the attraction and popularity of the *Power Rangers* concept. Being ghettoised on Saturday morning children's television endows the series with exclusivity – it is a kids' thing which grown-ups largely cannot, nor wish to, follow. The strength of the series lies in its profound innocence: like early cinema, it seems to be groping for a new visual grammar that will suit its content. The influences – Hong Kong martial arts films, *Godzilla* movies, anodyne teen-angst television series – are always obvious, but they function as shameless steals rather than as clever borrowings. Unlike the *Batman* franchise and the recent *Casper* movie, nostalgia plays no part in *Power Rangers'* appeal, neither can pre-built subcultural hipness (pace *Tank Girl* and *Judge Dredd*) tarnish it. Quite simply and literally, the original series can't afford to be clever. Ruthlessly formulaic, it ends up looking like a touchingly cheap *bricolage* of *Monkey* (the Far East Asian paganistic television

series) and *Beverly Hills 90210* (the American pap-and-pimples series).

Unfortunately, the makers of *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie* have been infected by the Hollywood urge to lure the widest possible audience. Armed with loads of money to spend in comparison to the series' budget, they drafted in special effects teams, wrote a distressingly coherent script, and threw in some lame Freddie Krueger-style humour. Gone are the gloriously weird battles between puppets and men in Zord-suits that looked like they were taking place in another dimension (or at the very least, in a Toho Studio backlot). Instead we get shiny new ectomorphicons and Zords which look like characters from an expensive but dull CD-ROM game. Gone are the curiously old-fashioned cameo-insets that framed the Rangers as they shouted the names of dinosaurs at "morphin time". Instead we're given discreet, zooming graphics which unimaginatively respect the conventions of the 'frame'. Gone is Trini (my favourite Ranger) substituted by Ayesha, the new Yellow Ranger who lacks Trini's intelligence and wit, but is played by pop singer Karen Ashley of KRUSH. The plangency of the original series is almost wholly drained, except for the rather touching sequence where the children try to save their parents from the lure of Ooze's consumerist cant.

Stylistically homogenised throughout, *Power Rangers*, although far more enjoyable, is now formally barely different from any of the other schlocky tie-ins and rip-offs that are clogging our multiplexes at present. Blown up to fill a big screen and stretched to two hours, the *mise en scène* is sparse and the pace stumbles, whereas the television series seems bursting with bodies and swift as a kick to the chest. (Indeed critics have decried the film and series' violence.) Others may be seduced by its slick computer-generated hyper-realism and its predictable shape-shifting villain, but I'm waiting on my couch for the re-runs.

Leslie Felperin

The Quick and the Dead

USA 1995

Director: Sam Raimi

Certificate

15

Distributor

Columbia TriStar

Production Company

TriStar Pictures

Executive Producers

Toby Jaffe

Robert Tapert

Producers

Joshua Donen

Allen Shapiro

Patrick Markey

Co-producer

Chuck Binder

Sharon Stone

Production Supervisors

Karen Hughes

2nd Unit:

Carole Fontana

Production Co-ordinator

Susan Dukow

Unit Production Manager

Patrick Markey

Location Manager

Carole Fontana

2nd Unit Director

Tery Leonard

Assistant Directors

John Cameron

Sarah Addington

Bob Wagner

2nd Unit:

Denis Stewart

Lisa Satriano

Script Supervisor

Trudy Ramirez

Casting

Francine Maisler

Associate:

Kathleen Driscoll

Screenplay

Simon Moore

Director of Photography

Dante Spinotti

2nd Unit Director of Photography

Kyle Rudolph

Camera Operators

Gary Jay

2nd Unit:

Phil Carr-Foster

Monty Rowan

Gary Huddleston

Steadicam Operator

Kyle Rudolph

Visual Effects Supervisor

Peter Donen

Digital Compositing

The Computer Film

Company

Matte Shots

Illusion Arts

Editor

Pietro Scalia

Production Designer

Patrizia Von

Brandenstein

Art Director

Steve Saklad

Set Decorator

Hilton Rosemarin

Storyboard Artist

Doug Lefler

Special Effects Co-ordinator

Al Di Sarro

Special Effects

Foreman:

Joe Ramsey

2nd Unit:

Andrew Sebok

Jack Davis

Costume Design

Judianna Makovsky

Costume Supervisor

Bruce Erickson

Key Make-up

Gary Liddiard

Special Make-up Effects

Kurtzman, Nicotero &

Berger EFX Group

Key Hairstylist

Bunny Parker

Titles

Robert Dawson

Opticals

Cinema Research

Corporation

Music

Alan Silvestri

Music Editors

Kenneth Karman

Thomas Drescher

Songs/Music Extracts

"El Tierra Caliente"

by Alex Gonzalez,

"Un Mexicano En El

Norte" by Demetrio

Farias, performed by El

Mariachi Tepalcatepec

De Michoacan

Supervising Sound Editors

Lawrence H. Mann

Uncle Jay Kamen

Sound Editors

Noah Blough

David B. Cohn

Valerie Davidson

Mark Gordon

Mark A. Lanza

Mark L. Mangino

Steve Olson

Marshall Winn

Jeremy Gordon

Supervising Foley Editor

Scott Burrow

Sound Mixer

Dennis L. Maitland

Foley Mixer

Nurses Gezalyan

Music Scoring Mixer

Dennis Sands

Sound Re-recording Mixers

Sergio Reyes

B. Tennyson Sebastian

III

Gregory H. Watkins

Foley Sound Effects

Gary Hecker

Dan O'Connell

Stunt Co-ordinator

Terry Leonard

Armourer

Thell Reed

Boss Wrangler

Kim Burke

Wrangler Gang Boss

Bill Getzwiller

Cast

Sharon Stone

Ellen

Gene Hackman

John Herod

Russell Crowe

Cort

Leonardo DiCaprio

Kid

Tobin Bell

Dog Kelly

Roberts Blossom

Doc Wallace

Kevin Conway

Eugene Dred

Keith David

Sgt Cantrell

Lance Henriksen

Ace Hanlon

Pat Hingle

Horace the Bartender

Gary Sinise

Marshall

Mark Boone Junior

Scars

Olivia Burnette

Katie

Fay Masterson

Mattie Silk

Raynor Scheime

Ratsy

Woody Strode

Charles Moonlight

Jerry Swindall

Blind Boy

Scott Spiegel

Gold Teeth Man

Jonathon Gill

Spotted Horse

Sven-Ole Thorsen

Gutzon

John Cameron

Bordello Swell

Bruce Campbell

Wedding Shemp

Michael Stone

Counselor

Butch Molina

Saloon Patron

Gregory Goossen

Mick Garis

Oliver Bear

Young Herod's Men

9,687 feet

108 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Technicolor

John Herod, the psychotic *de facto* ruler of a Western town called Redemption, is holding a gunfighting contest. Drawn by a huge pot of money, gunslingers have come from afar, but the only one Herod cares about is Cort, a reformed outlaw turned preacher. In the saloon, Herod has Cort strung up and is shooting away the legs of the chair which supports him to force him to take part in the contest. Ellen shoots the rope and saves Cort's life. She enters the contest, but Cort still refuses, even in the face of savage beatings and humiliation. When he is given a gun and someone draws on him, however, his reflexes take over and he shoots the man dead. He gives the nervous Ellen advice which helps her through her first round contest.

During a drunken liaison with Herod's son Kid, Ellen happens upon a store of dynamite. She is tormented by memories of a childhood trauma involving Herod. He invites her to his rooms, and she plainly wants to kill him but can't go through with it. The competition progresses and Herod decrees fights should now be to the death. Having killed a hitman hired by the townsfolk, he demands more taxes from the cowering residents. Ellen tries to leave Redemption, but the vengeful force which drives her is too strong.

Ellen and Cort become lovers, but are impelled to fight in the semi-final. With his connivance, she plays dead. Herod kills his son in the other semi-final, but as he and the preacher – who turns out to be a former compadre – face each other, the town is consumed in a massive dynamite conflagration, from which Ellen emerges to confront Herod. When she was a little girl in Redemption and her father was town sheriff, Herod strung him up and gave her the chance to save him by shooting the rope. She missed and shot him in the head. Ellen now kills Herod, gives Cort her father's marshall's badge, and rides out of town.

The *Quick and the Dead* is a rather unappetising prospect at first sight: Sharon Stone clambering onto the virago Western bandwagon long after most people thought it had left town, with the gnarled and entirely untrustworthy Sam Raimi clutching the reins. This film's feminist credentials could hardly be less convincing. Stone's Ellen has a mysterious tendency, apparently common in the old

west, to forget to do up her shirt buttons when she leaves the house – but in its own warped way, *The Quick and the Dead* is something of a classic.

There is more to this film than Sharon Stone striking another heroic blow for womankind by shooting male chauvinists with her big gun, although obviously that does play a big part. Simon Moore's dialogue – "I'm gonna kill you if I have to ride all the way to hell to do it" – is mostly on auto-sass, but there is the odd piquant exchange. "I need a woman" grunts one of Redemption's many unappetising specimens of masculinity. Our heroine ripostes, "You need a bath".

Stone's performance is not entirely as anticipated though. She might have been expected to do the ice-cold avenger thing – resolute and iron-willed with perhaps the odd flickering eyebrow to betray a moment's anxiety. Instead she opts for perpetual quaking irresolution. Far from stone-faced, her mouth trembles with fear every time the splendidly villainous Gene Hackman hoves into view. This might be stretching her acting abilities to places they were never meant to go but it actually contributes substantially to an amusingly overwrought atmosphere.

There are some fine supporting acts, with Leonardo DiCaprio particularly cheeky as the ill-fated son of the estimable Hackman, but the real star of the film is its director. Sam Raimi's project – to chop up spaghetti Western langor with an extra hit of slasher movie malevolence – seems a simple one, but he sets about it with such sadistic vigour that what might have been dreary pastiche becomes gleeful mischief. Spaghetti Western quotes – blind boy, coffin maker measuring up the hero etc. – start out a little too obvious, but the longer the film continues, the more Raimi's malicious sense of fun takes hold. There are some splendidly nasty touches. His camera lurches into viciously phased close-ups with the psychotic inevitability of a drunk walking into a door frame. And if the heroine's return from the dead does not exactly come as a surprise, the true horror of her childhood trauma – not you killed my paw but I killed my paw – is cunningly held back till the very last.

The rococo cinematography is a joy from start to finish too. There's one moment when the camera shoots up Hackman's leg to get to a clock face... how often have you seen an entire auditorium moved to spontaneous applause by a camera angle?

Ben Thompson



Blondes have more guns: Sharon Stone

Red Firecracker, Green Firecracker (Paoda Shuang Deng)

Hong Kong/China 1993

Director: He Ping

Certificate

15

Distributor

Electric Pictures

Production Companies

Yung & Associate (Hong Kong)/Xi'an Film Studio/Beijing Salon Films

Executive Producer

Yong Naiming

Producers

Chan Chun-Keung [Chen Jinqiang]

Yong Naiming

Production Managers

Zhao Wanmin

Qiao Limin

Post-production Supervisors

Gao Xiulan

Li Hongbin

Assistant Directors

Yu Xiaobing

Xin Sheng

Screenplay

Da Ying

Based on the novel by Feng Jicai

Director of Photography

Yang Lun

Editor

Yuan Hong

Art Director

Qian Yunxiu

Set Decorator

Zhang Deqin

Costume Design

Chen Changmin

Costume/Hair Supervisor

Xu Guangrui

Make-up

Ma Shuangyin

Music

Zhao Jiping

Music Performed by

China Central

Orchestra

Flute Soloist:

Sun Yongzhi

Music Conductor

Hu Bingxu

Choreography

Qiao Ruiming

Action Choreography

Meng Gencheng

Sound Recordists/Mixers

Gu Changning

Zhang Wen

Historical Consultant

Tao Fuhai

Cast

Ning Jing

Cai Chunzhi

Wu Gang

Niu Bao

Zhao Xiaorui

Man Dihong

Qiao Yang

Chief Servant

Xu Zhongyun

Old Master Xu

Zhao Liang

Hei Liu

Ju Xingmao

Bao Ge

Li Yushen

Manservant

Lu Hui

Old Boss Wang

Wang Liyuan

Wang Ma

Zhang Bolin

Businessman

10,422 feet

115 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Subtitles

Travelling artist Niu Bao arrives in a town on the Yellow River and is hired to paint traditional New Year pictures for the Cai family, whose wealth is founded on a fireworks factory. The family owns the entire region, and is the biggest local employer. Niu Bao finds that the head of the family, Chunzhi, is a 19-year-old woman, who dresses and behaves like a man. Niu Bao is warned that the household has many rules; he will be punished if he breaks them. He is quartered in the house's South Chamber, and begins work on the 'door god' paintings.

He initially commands respect from the household's head of staff Man Dihong, but Man soon comes to resent Niu Bao's independence of spirit. And when Man realises that Chunzhi is interested in the newcomer, he turns against him and tries to humiliate him. Chunzhi is shocked to discover that Niu Bao has painted her as a woman and slaps him; but the picture awakens her latent desire to be a woman. Niu Bao, however, mocks her conservatism, and she turns him over to senior retainer Qiao and Man Dihong for punishment. In the event, Chunzhi cannot

bear to see him beaten and threatened with castration. She releases him, and he leaves the district.

Niu Bao returns to the house in the late spring, announcing his presence by throwing a defiant firework in to the courtyard. Chunzhi visits his lodging at night and they make love. Chunzhi begins dressing as a woman and wearing make-up, throwing the Cai household into disarray. When Niu Bao admits to Man Dihong that he has slept with Chunzhi, Man organises a gang to beat him up. Qiao and old retainer Xu categorically forbid Chunzhi to marry Niu Bao, and organise a three-day ritual to propitiate the Cai ancestors. Niu Bao again leaves the district.

But his love for Chunzhi draws him back. The household elders meet to discuss how to deal with him, and recall that an outsider was allowed to marry into the Cai family in the Ming Dynasty by winning a fireworks contest. Man Dihong is chosen to represent the Cai family in a new contest, with the promise that he can marry Chunzhi if he wins. The contest takes place in a stone quarry. Both men allow fireworks to explode on or near their bodies, but Niu Bao is finally defeated by his attempt to launch a series of fireballs from a tube gripped between his thighs. He is stretchered off, and disappears without seeing Chunzhi again.

Some time later, Chunzhi is married to Man Dihong and expecting her first child. She consoles herself with the private thought that Niu Bao is the child's real father.

Red Firecracker, Green Firecracker is one of the few 'serious' Chinese movies of recent years to have absolutely no subtext: all of its phallic play, gender subversion and castration fantasies are right up there on the screen. The film fits squarely into the Chinese genre inaugurated by Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum* in 1987, being set in the backwoods of Republican China and using a fairly torrid narrative to raise the issues of desire, sexuality and repression. The genre has latterly included such movies as Huang Jianxin's *The Wooden Man's Bride* (Yan Shen, 1993) and Zhou Yuchao's *Sweet Grass* (Huang Sha, Qing Cao, Hong Taiyang, 1995), but *Red Firecracker, Green Firecracker* is arguably the best of them. It's expertly judged visual style – austere framing and classical editing patterns contradicted by sumptuous dark colours and textures – gives it the edge.

He Ping came to this project as a hired hand, and says he doesn't consider it as 'personal' a film as *The Swordsman in Double-Flag Town* (Shuang-Qi Zhen Daoke, 1990), certainly the most innovative and fully realised genre movie made in China in recent years, a Leone-esque transposition of codes and conventions from the western into Chinese frontier terms. *Swordsman* was the last project green-lighted by Wu Tianming during his time as head of the Xi'an Film Studio, and it saved He Ping from a career directing such turgid historical dramas. The international success of *Swordsman* – which has been distrib-

uted and/or seen on television virtually everywhere except Britain – was a surprise for both the studio and He Ping himself. *Red Firecracker, Green Firecracker*, by contrast, reflects the effective collapse of the Xi'an studio as a production entity and the new order in Chinese film production; the project was put together and packaged by private companies in Hong Kong and Beijing.

To acknowledge this is not to devalue the film, which has solid conceptual roots in the social changes in present-day China. Chinese women restricted to having single children increasingly refuse to see themselves as procreators, a change which has led to widespread rethinking of traditional sex roles and attitudes to sexual pleasure. The film's account of Cai Chunzhi's flowering as a woman and Niu Bao's literal emasculation as a sensitive-but-macho male goes some way further than Zhang Yimou did in *Red Sorghum* to explore these new ideas and attitudes, and the director's playfully explosive imagery brings the issues to life in a way that's not in the least parochial.

The film's weaknesses are mostly in the script. The adaptation of a story by Feng Jicai, a specialist in folkloric erotica, is plodding and repetitive. Niu Bao leaves and returns at least once too many times, and the machinations of the clan elders against him are thinly sketched. Similarly, details like Niu Bao's bonding with a street urchin are dropped in opportunistically, with no real attempt to integrate them into the narrative flow. On the other hand, the aural cross-cutting between voice-overs spoken by Chunzhi and Niu Bao works well to anchor the narrative sprawl in the central characters' shifting sense of their relationship and, in the case of Chunzhi, her own identity. The effect is curiously touching, and mitigated only slightly by the coarseness of Ning Jing's performance once she has discovered her femininity.

Visually, though, He Ping and his cinematographer Yang Lun acquit themselves with great aplomb. Predictably, they use formal compositions to render the stultifying atmosphere of the Cai household and fluid tracking and hand-held shots to render the onset of unbridled passions, but the control of colour and the flair of the design are strong enough to counter the sense of *déjà vu*. The film is full of individual arresting images: Niu Bao removing his shoes on entering the Cai household, because the soles contain metal nails which are potentially dangerous in the proximity of so much gunpowder; the debris from a firecracker falling like snow in the household courtyard; the climactic fireworks contest enacted in a safe stone quarry hung with Cai family banners in five colours. In its way, in fact, *Firecracker* points a way forward for "Fifth Generation" film-making in China as clearly as *Farewell My Concubine* did. It rises to the challenge of telling a story rooted in Chinese history and culture in terms that will be accessible to any viewer, Chinese or not.

Tony Rayns

Safe Passage

USA 1994

Director: Robert Allan Ackerman

Certificate

15

Distributor

Entertainment
Production Company
Pacific Western
Executive Producers

David Gale
Betsy Beers
Ruth Vitale

Producer

Gale Anne Hurd

Line Producer

Diana Pokorny

Production Executive

Leon Dudevior

Production Supervisor

Mari Jo Winkler

Production Co-ordinator

Cheryl Ann Mironczuk

Location Manager

Joseph E. Iberti

Executive in Charge of Post-production

Joe Fineman

Post-production Supervisor

Sara King

Script Supervisor

Mary Cybulski

Casting

Pam Dixon Mickelson

Screenplay

Deena Goldstone

Based on the novel by

Ellyn Bache

Director of Photography

Ralf Bode

Camera Operator

Michael Stone

Editor

Rick Shaine

Production Designer

Dan Bishop

Art Director

Jefferson Sage

Set Decorator

Dianna Freas

Set Dressers

Anthony Baldasare

Peter J. Von Bartheld

Dan Kenney

Robin Koenig

Jerry Kadar

Storyboard Artist

Brick Mason

Special Effects Supervisor

Steve Kirshoff

Costume Design

Renee Ehrlich Kalfus

Associate Costume Design

Lucy W. Corrigan

Wardrobe Supervisors

Jane E. Myers

Marcia Patten

Make-up

Marilyn Carbone

Michal Bigger

Key Hairstylist

Peg Schierholz

Title Design

Dan Perri

Opticals

CRC

Music

Mark Isham

Jingle:

Ken Mazar

Music Performed by

Pianists:

David Goldblatt

Rich Rutenburg

Guitar:

Peter Maunu

Bass:

Doug Lunn

Harp:

Katie Kirkpatrick

Percussion:

Alan Estes

Music Conductor /

Orchestrations

Ken Kugler

Music Producer

Mark Isham

Music Supervisor

Tim Sexton

Music Editor

Tom Carlson

Music Co-ordinator

Laurie Klemper

Songs/Music Extracts

"Touched By the Sun"

by and performed by

Carly Simon; "Gimme

My Props" by M.

Dewese, performed

by Kool Moe Dee;

"The More We Get

Together" performed

by Raffi; "Johnny

McEldoo" performed

by Diam Sheppard, Sean

Astin; "Someday,

Someway" by and

performed by Marshall

Crenshaw; "Trouble

Me" by Natalie

Merchant, Dennis Drew

performed by 10,000

Maniacs; "Dreams"

by Dolores O'Riordan,

Noel Hogan, performed

by the cranberries;

"Pictures at an

Exhibition" by Modest

Mussorgsky;

"Lohengrin, Prelude

to Act III" by Richard

Wagner; "Mefistofele"

by Arrigo Boito

Supervising Sound Editor

Richard King

Sound Editors

Catherine Calleson

Ruth Bird

Dialogue Editors

James Matheny

Kimberly Lambert

Supervising ADR Editor

Cliff Latimer

ADR Editor

Holly Hukins

Foley Editors

Christopher Flick

Jeffrey R. Payne

Production Sound Mixer

Tod Maitland

ADR Mixers

David Boulton

Peter Waggoner

Charleen Richards

ADR Recordist

Greg Steele

Sound Recordist

Robin Johnston

Music Mixer/Recordist

Stephen Krause

Sound Re-recording Mixers

Matthew Iadarola

Gary Gegan

Foley Artists

Alicia Stevenson

Zane Bruce

Stunt Co-ordinators

Gloria Fioramonti

Jerry Hewitt

Near Miss Scene:

Bill Anagnos

Cast

Susan Sarandon

Mag Singer

Nick Stahl

Simon

Sam Shepard

Patrick

Marcia Gay Harden

Cynthia

Robert Sean Leonard

Alfred

Sean Astin

Izzy

Priscilla Reeves

Mrs Silverman

Joe Lisi

Dog Owner

Matt Keeslar

Percival

Marvin Scott

Bill Boggs

Kathryn Kinley

Cindy Hom

Newspeople

Christopher Wynkoop

Evangelist

Philip Arthur Ross
Merle
Steven Robert Ross
Darren
Jesse Lee
Percival, age 9 and 10
Jordan Clarke
Coach
Jeffrey DeMunn
Doctor
Philip Bosco
Mort
Jason London
Gideon
Rutanya Alda
Beth
Kazuya Takahashi
TV News Cameraman

Lisa Castleman
Sally Hacker
TV Reporters
Ralph Howard
Radio Reporter
David Leary
Voice of Marine
Spokesman
Ralph Byers
Voice of Sinai Reporter

8,846 feet
98 minutes

Original Running Time
Dolby stereo
In colour
Anamorphic

Mag Singer, a middle-aged wife and mother with seven sons (six full-grown) rings her estranged husband, Patrick, to warn him that she's had a premonition something terrible is going to happen to one of the children. Although sceptical, he drops by the house to see that she is alright. They argue. He is struck down by a mysterious old allergy which causes him temporary loss of sight.

While he is convalescing, they hear an important newsflash. There has been an explosion in an American army base in the Sinai desert. One of their children, Percival, is a Marine and may be among the dead. Bodies are still being recovered, and it will be some time before they know for sure whether or not he survived.

The rest of the family return home to join their parents as they await further news. But, as they mount a vigil, old tensions soon bubble to the surface. Izzy, a bumbling, scientific type, irritates his father with his determination to work out the cause of the allergy. Gideon, a gifted athlete, is racked with guilt, convinced he is somehow responsible for his brother's decision to join the Marines in the first place. Alfred, the most level-headed member of the family, turns up with his older girlfriend in tow, and straightaway tries to take control of the household.

Mag struggles to cope with the unexpected reunion. She is due to take a civil service exam, and had been looking forward to getting herself a job and starting a new life independent of the family. After three days, there is still no news from Sinai. However, family harmony is gradually restored. Mag and Patrick patch up their differences. Izzy helps cure Patrick's allergy. The telephone rings. Sure enough, Percival is alive and well.

Safe Passage is set deep in the heart of the suburbs, in one of those big detached houses, identical to every other alongside it. At first, this seems more mausoleum than happy home. Everything is packed away in boxes. "I had too many children, I was asking for trouble," Susan Sarandon's character, Mag Singer, complains, and it's hard not to agree: outside 50's Hollywood musicals, seven sons is a little on the excessive side. Six of them are fully grown and have fled the roost. She is estranged from her husband. She's entering late middle age without a job or a qualification. Now, she wants her independence.



The news from nowhere: Susan Sarandon, Sam Shepard

In other words, we're presented with a perfect picture of domestic dysfunction. The fact that Mag's husband is played by Sam Shepard, that great chronicler of unhappy American families, reinforces the sense that this is going to be a film about the transience of relationships and the monotony of married life. Unfortunately, it's nothing of the sort. A contrived plot twist or two later, and most of her family are back in harness. The seventh son, played by Matt Keeslar, is missing, possibly dead, after an explosion in the Middle East, and the family are mounting a vigil until they hear what has happened to him.

Confining your characters to a single location may work in a play or sitcom, but it makes for claustrophobic viewing in a movie. Director Robert Allan Ackerman is a veteran of the stage. He clearly loves his actors and seems determined to shoot them all in big close-ups as often as possible. Deena Goldstone's script, adapted from a novel by Ellyn Bache, is top heavy with dialogue but decidedly short on action. Mag ventures out into the snow to help her youngest son with his paper round and protect him from their neighbours' fearsome dog. In one scene, she gets as far as the local school, where she is taking her Civil Service exam. On the whole, though, events unfold inside the house. It used to be a common complaint against British movies that they featured too much tea drinking. Sam Shepard goes through gallons here. Tea even turns out to be crucial to the plot, a sure sign that entropy is setting in somewhere.

With this particular family, and with dreary production design which foregrounds greys and browns, it's hard not to yearn for the brashness and brio of America's best television family comedies such as *Roseanne*. The kind of upper middle-class America that *Safe Passage* evokes is more like that portrayed in Robert Redford's equally

earnest *Ordinary People*. The outside world hardly seems to intrude. There's no sex, no violence, nothing to shake the audience. The Middle East is referred to vaguely, because that is where the missing son is posted. But the film-makers never stop to ask what he, or the American army, is doing there. It's somewhere away from home, and hence somewhere bad.

This son, Percival, is defined as the problem child by a glib flashback which shows him smoking a joint with his mother and talking about how he doesn't want to go to college. The rest of the family are allowed a few minor foibles, but they're otherwise presented as ordinary, well-adjusted all-American boys. What is extraordinary is the way that none of them show the slightest interest in popular culture: there's no room for computers or *Beavis and Butthead* or music of any sort.

Given the material, it's scarcely surprising that the acting is on the earnest, self-conscious side. Shepard spends much of the film lying on his back with his eyes covered (his character has an allergy which causes temporary bouts of blindness) while Sarandon oscillates between strained eccentricity (she wrestles with dogs, throws crockery and has 'premonition dreams') and Mother Courage-like stoicism. Certain scenes are neatly observed: for instance, Sarandon's frustration at the way her husband dunks his teabag seven times in the mug and then lobs it into the sink for somebody else to dispose of, or the moment when she launches into a diatribe about their faltering relationship without realising he's already fast asleep. Overall, though, this is a depressingly conservative vision of present-day family life. It hints at all sorts of tensions simmering away between husbands, wives and children, but then simply sweeps them under the carpet in the name of domestic harmony.

Geoffrey Macnah

The Usual Suspects

USA 1995

Director: Bryan Singer

Certificate

18
Distributor
PolyGram

Production Company
PolyGram Filmed
Entertainment
Spellings Films
International present
A Blue Parrot/Bad Hat
Harry Production/
Rosco Film GmbH
Executive Producers
Robert Jones
Hans Brockman
Francois Duplat
Art Horan

Producers

Bryan Singer
Michael McDonnell

Co-producer

Kenneth Kokin

Production Supervisor

Vicky Herman

Production Co-ordinator

New York:
Tom Adelman

Production Manager

New York:
Jane Raab

Location Managers

Chanel Salzer
Ashley Friedman

New York:

Greg Schnabel

Post-production Supervisor

New York:
Michael Tinger

Post-production

Co-ordinator

New York:
Jennifer Flynn

2nd Unit Director

Kenneth Kokin

Assistant Directors

James Deck
Alan Steinman

Athena Alexander

New York:

Dave Marcellino

Script Supervisors

Wendy Dallas
Haley McLane

2nd Unit:

Jana Ludwigova

Casting

Francine Maisler

New York Associates:

Kathy Driscoll

Lisa Miller

Screenplay

Christopher McQuarrie

Director of Photography

Newton Thomas Sigel

Additional Photography

Bruce Douglas Johnson

2nd Unit Directors of

Photography

Scott Sakamoto

Eric Goldstein

Steadicam Operators

Scott Sakamoto

Chris Squires

Editor

John Ottman

Production Designer

Howard Cummings

Art Director

David Lazan

Set Decorator

Sara Andrews

Lead Scenic

Phillip Schneider

Storyboard Artist

John Coven

Special Effects Co-ordinator

Roy Downey

Special Effects Foreman

Greg Hendrickson

Modus BFX Crew

Richard Mayberry

Chris Cantley

Michele Barton

David Greathouse

Yolanda Squatpump

Costume Design

Louise Mingenbach

Costume Supervisors

Lori Eskowitz

New York:

Prudence Moriarty

Key Make-up

Michelle Buhler

Special Make-up Created By

David Barton

Key Hairstylist

Barbara Olvera

Title Design

Bob Dawson

Opticals

Buena Vista Imaging

Music

John Ottman

Music Conductor /

Orchestrations

Larry Groupe

Music Editor

Lia Vollack

Songs/Music Extracts

"Le Sons et les parfums

tournent dans l'air

du soir" by Claude

Debussy, performed

by Jon Kull; "Steppin'

Out" by Paul Nelson,

Carl Verheyen, performed

by Paul Nelson

Supervising Sound Editor

Chuck Michael

Sound Editors

Acme Soundworks

Dialogue Editors

David Spence

Sukey Fontelleu

ADR Supervisor

George Berndt

Foley Supervisor

Mark Pappas

ADR Editor

Donald Sylvester

Foley Editor

Jonathan Klein

Sound Recordists

Jack Keller

David Behle

ADR Recordists

Greg Steele

Rick Canelli

Foley Recordists

Don Givens

Tammy Treadwell

Sound Mixer

Geoffrey Patterson

ADR Mixers

Charleen Richards

Thomas J. O'Connell

Foley Mixers

Randy Petroski

Robert Deshaune

Music Recordists/Mixers

Darrell Harvey

Dan Abernathy

Sound Re-recording Mixers

Robert Litt

Elliott Tyson

Greg P. Russell

Sound Effects Editors

Nash Michael

Karen Wilson

Richard Burton

Foley Artists

Claudette Cucci

John Cucci

Stunt Co-ordinators

Gary Jensen

2nd Unit:

Ethan Jensen

Marine Co-ordinator

Bertram McCann

Cast

Stephen Baldwin

Michael McManus

Gabriel Byrne

Dean Keaton

Benicio Del Toro

Fred Fenster

Kevin Pollak

Todd Hockney

Kevin Spacey

Verbal

Chazz Palminteri

Dave Kujan

Pete Postlethwaite

Kobayashi

Suzy Amis

Edie Finneran

Giancarlo Esposito

Jack Baer

Dan Hedaya

Jeff Rabin

Paul Bartel

Smuggler

Carl Bressler

Saul Berg

Phillip Simon

Fortier

Jack Shearer

Renault

Christine Estabrook

Dr Plummer

Clark Gregg

Dr Walters

Morgan Hunter

Arkosh Kovash

Ken Daly

Translator

Michelle Clunie

Sketch Artist

Louis Lombardi

Strausz

Frank Medrano

Rizzi

Ron Gilbert

Daniel Metzheiser

Vito D'Ambrasio

Arresting Officer

Gene Lythgow

Cop on Pier

Bob Elmore

David Powledge

Bob Pennetta

Bill Bates

Bodyguards

Smadar Hanson

Keyser's Wife

Castula Guerra

Arturo Marquez

Peter Rocca

Arturo's Bodyguard

Bert Williams

Old Cop

9,518 feet

105 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

In San Pedro harbour, California, a cargo ship explodes, leaving 27 dead. There are three survivors: a Hungarian named Arkosh Kovash, lying badly burnt in a hospital bed, and a crippled New York con-man, 'Verbal' Kint. Granted immunity from prosecution in return for his testimony, Kint is questioned by US Customs Agent Dave Kujan. Kujan is convinced that Dean Keaton, a crooked ex-cop, masterminded the raid and survived. Meanwhile, Federal agent Jack Baer questions Kovash via an interpreter.

Kint recalls how he met Keaton six weeks earlier when they were pulled in on a police line-up, suspected of a truck hijack. Also in the line-up were entryman Michael McManus, his partner Fred Fenster, and explosives expert Todd Hockney. During their night in the holding cell, McManus outlines a plan for holding up a 'taxi service' run for crooks by corrupt New York cops. Keaton, who is trying to go straight to please his girlfriend, attorney Edie Finneran, at first refuses to take part, but is persuaded by Kint.

The heist works perfectly, bringing down scandal on the NYPD, and McManus suggests they launder the loot through his regular LA fence, Redfoot. Mistrusting McManus, the others accompany him to California where Redfoot offers them another job robbing a Texan jeweller, Saul Berg. Berg, who proves to be a drug dealer, is killed in the shoot-out. The gang are later contacted by a lawyer, Kobayashi, claiming to represent the man who wanted Berg killed, the mysterious master criminal Keyzer Soze - a name also mentioned by the terrified Kovash.

Kobayashi explains that Soze engineered the original police line-up, because all five men have unwittingly trespassed on his territory. To make amends, they must now raid a drug-smuggling ship in San Pedro harbour run by Soze's rivals, an Argentinian gang. Initially the gang refuse and Fenster takes off, but he is traced and killed by Soze's men. Keaton plans to kill Kobayashi until he learns the lawyer has Edie in his power. The four raid the ship - though Keaton leaves

Kint on the pier to contact Edie if things go wrong - and find no drugs but an Argentinian, Marquez, who can identify Soze. While Kint watches from onshore, Hockney, McManus and Keaton are shot by Soze, who then blows up the ship.

Kujan furiously accuses Kint of lying, insisting that Keaton was really Soze and has faked his own death. But Kint sticks to his story and Kujan is obliged to let him go. Meanwhile Baer has had a police artist draw a picture of Soze from Kovash's description and faxes it through. As it arrives Kujan realises Soze's true identity.

When, in 1950, Hitchcock included a misleading flashback in *Stage Fright* it aroused great indignation: the director "Hadn't played fair" with his audience. It's perhaps symptomatic of a more cynical age, when the deconstructionist concept of the unreliable narrator has become a creative commonplace, that *The Usual Suspects* can be built around a long flashback narration that's a lie from start to finish. The final-reel revelation - that virtually nothing in the preceding 100 minutes can be taken as true - also, by way of bonus, neatly side-steps any critical objections to the massive holes in the plot. Implausible! Inconsistent! Well, of course it is.

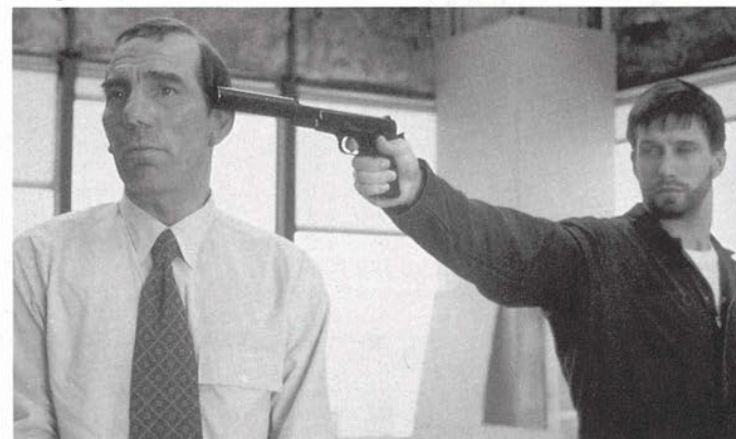
Misdirecting the audience, in any case, is the stock-in-trade of any good thriller; *The Usual Suspects* just takes it a stage further. Even when not luring us into its maze of flashbacks the film deftly sets up tensions between perception and reality, playing off what's said about a given individual with the way that person seems to be: Kint's account of Keaton against Kujan's view against the Keaton that's shown to us. (The film's rich in K-names, maybe in homage to the great Czech maze-maker himself.) Singer draws from his cast (cops no less than crooks) edgy, side-long performances that constantly hint at hidden motivations and past histories teetering on the brink of fantasy - a challenge to which his actors rise superbly. Pete Postlethwaite, faced with playing a non-Japanese lawyer with a Japanese name, displays admirable unfazability; making no attempt at a Mr Moto-style accent, he gives his performance a remote, fastidious spin with the faintest dash of orien-

tal melancholy, like Gielgud playing Chang the Deputy Lama in *Lost Horizon*.

The Usual Suspects is Singer and McQuarrie's second film; their first, *Public Access* (which showed at the London Film Festival a couple of years ago), also played with deceptive appearances, if in less labyrinthine fashion. The protagonist of the earlier film is a clean-cut young man who infiltrates a sleepy burg's public cable station and sets the townsfolk at each other's throats. This disruption isn't his aim, though it amuses him; his secret agenda is yet more lethal. In the same way Kint's monologue conceals layers beneath layers, its ostensible purpose a verbal smokescreen for its true one. Or for what, after the final disclosure, we take to be its true one - since it may well be that Soze doesn't exist after all. Or that multiple Sozes exist, offering a mythic persona to be adopted by any underworld boss wanting to terrorise his rivals. "The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled," says Kint, "was convincing the world he didn't exist." An even greater one, he could have added, was convincing it that he did.

The theological allusion is apt. There's a near-religious intensity to much of the film: Gabriel Byrne's fallen-angel of a bent cop, the sacrificial myth of Soze's Hungarian origins and, at the heart of the film, the duel between Kujan and Kint, played out in a tiny, windowless office like a confessional where the Customs agent hounds his captive with all the fervour of a High Inquisitor. All the action scenes, tautly staged though they are, feed back into this claustrophobic space. Palminteri and Spacey play expertly off each other, the one circling and harrying, eyes narrowed and lip jutting, the other slumped in maudlin self-abasement or taking off on another meandering verbal riff. But with the exception of Suzy Amis, stuck with an underwritten token-female role, there's not a weak link in the cast, all responding with relish to Singer's tight direction and McQuarrie's sinewy writing. Dark, tortuous and richly atmospheric, *The Usual Suspects* is the most satisfyingly close-textured thriller for years; even once you know the twist in the tail, there's enough going on here on every level to make it equally rewarding viewing a second time around.

Philip Kemp



Lining up: Pete Postlethwaite, Stephen Baldwin

Waterworld

USA 1995

Director: Kevin Reynolds

Certificate
12

Distributor
UIP

Production Company
Universal Pictures

Executive Producers
Jeffrey Mueller
Andrew Light
Ilona Herzberg

Producers
Charles Gordon
John Davis
Kevin Costner

Line Producer
Gene Levy

Associate Producer
David Fulton

2nd Unit Production Supervisor
Stephen J. Traxler

Production Co-ordinators
Lisbeth Wynn-Owen
Gary MacPherson

2nd Unit:
Anna St. John

LA:
Susan P. McCarthy

Production Manager
John J. Smith

Location Managers
Ginger Peterson

LA:
Ira Stanley Rosenstein

Post-production Supervisor
Doreen A. Dixon

2nd Unit Directors
David Ellis
Mickey Gilbert

Assistant Directors
Alan Curtiss
David Sardi
Robert Huberman
Scott Robertson
L. David Silva

2nd Unit:
Michael Green
George Parra
Sean McCarron

LA:
Melanie Grefe
David Hallinan

Script Supervisors
Ana Maria Quintana

2nd Unit:
Samantha Kirkeby

Casting
David Rubin

Associate:
Jakki Fink

Voice:
LA Mad Dogs
Gregg Avelone

Screenplay
Peter Rader
David Twohy

Director of Photography
Dean Semler

Additional Photography
Richard Merryman

2nd Unit Director of Photography
Gary Capo

Underwater Photography
Pete Romano

Camera Operators
Mark O'Kane
Richard Merryman
Ian Fox

2nd Unit:
Michael Ferris
Aaron Pazanti

Steadicam Operator
Mark O'Kane

Visual Effects Director
Michael J. McAlister

Visual Effects Units
Producer:
Kimberly K. Nelson

Production Supervisors:
Rae Griffith
Chris Watts

Co-ordinators:
Charles Linehan
Michael Vieira

Assistant Directors:
K. C. Hodenfield
Matthew Rowland

Angela Tortu
Directors of Photography:
Alex Funke
Mark Vargo
Camera Operators:
Chris Duddy
Scott Fuller
Editor:
Carole Kenneally
Additional Editor:
Christer Håkanson

Digital Film Services
Cinesite
Digital Effects
Supervisors:
Senior:
Brad C. Kuehn
Jamie Price
Digital Paint
Manager:
Pat Repola
Head of Production:
Mitzi C. Gallagher
Producer:
Suella Kennedy
Associate Producer:
Gil Gagnon

Digital Co-ordinators:
Karen Murphy
Mike Pryor
Digital Programmer:
Rodney Iwashina

Digital Imaging Co-ordinator:
Kim Shriver
Scanning/Recording
Operators:
Bob Fernely
Tom Gorey
Greg Hanigan

Composing Artists:
Victor Jimenez
Lawrence Littleton
Ann Monn
Ken Littleton
Bob Lyss
Doug Tubach

Digital Artists:
Phil Craig
Daryl Klein
Mary Leitz
Cristen Pescosolido
Cybele Sierra
Chris Holmes
Kristine Lankenau
Sean O'Connor
John Sasaki
Animators:
Fernando Benitez
Sean Dever
Sean Schur
Mark Brown
Joshua Kolden
Derek Spears

Stetson Visual Services
SVSI Miniature
Supervisors:
Robert Spurlock
Mark Stetson
SVSI Effects Supervisor:
John Stirber
SVSI Line Producer:
Robin D'Arcy
SVSI Consultant:
George Trimmer

The Computer Film Company
Richard Bain
Linda Esslinger
Rob Hodgson
Janet Sirrs
Janet Yale
Frank Mauer
Stuart McAr
David Fuhrer
Eric Weinschenk

Whalefin/Shark Animation Sequence
Rhythm and Hues, Inc.
Kerry Colonna
Nancy Kato

Frederic Sautai
Natasha Devaud
Amanda Ronai
Bill Westenhofer

Visual Effects
Boss Film Studios
Digital Effects
Supervisor:
Sean Phillips
Digital Imaging
Supervisor:
Chris Edwards
3D Tracking:
Andre Bustanoby

Computer Animators
Paul Casson
Janice Lew
Koichi Noguchi
Mark Swain
Todd Fulford
Raquel Morales
Dave Smith

Additional Visual Effects
Matte World Digital
Composite Image Film
E-Film
Dreamquest Images
Pacific Ocean Post
Digital Film
525 Post Production
Editel
OCS Freeze Film
Pacific Title Design

Blue Screen & Lighting
Out of the Blue Visual
Effects:
Blue Screen Visual
Effects Supervisor:
Stephanie Powell

Editor
Peter Boyle
Associate:
Jonathan Lucas

Production Designer
Dennis Gassner

Art Director
David Klassen

Set Design
Gary Diamond
Marco Rubeo
Natalie Richards
John Dexter
Paul Sonksi
Darrell L. Wight

Set Decorator
Nancy Haigh

Production Illustrator
Stefan Dechant

Chief Sculptor
Fred Arbogast

Miniatures
Dana Yurichich

Model Maker Foreman
David Cohen

Special Effects Co-ordinators
Martin R. Bresin
2nd Unit:
Archie Ahuna
John Frazier
Chuck Gasper
Michael Schorr

Physical Effects Designer
Peter M. Chesney

Costume Design
John Bloomfield

Costume Supervisors
Nick Scarano
2nd Unit:
Brian Callahan

Make-up Supervisor
Frank Perez

Key Make-up Artist
Jim McCoy

Body Make-up
Carol Borden
Diane Cummings

Special Make-up Effects Designed/Created By
The Burman Studio

Hair Supervisor
Elle Elliott

Key Hairstylist
Janis Clark

Title Design
Pittard Sullivan
Fitzgerald

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title & Art
Studio

Music
James Newton Howard

Music Conductors
Jeff Attmajian
LA Master Choral:
Paul Salamunovich

Orchestrations
Jeff Attmajian

Chris Boardman
Brad Dechter
Robert Elhai
James Newton Howard

Score Co-producer
Michael Mason

Music Editor
Jim Weidman

Songs/Music Extracts
"Music Box Theme" by
Mark Isham; "Peter
Gunn Theme" by Henry
Mancini, performed by
The Helleasters

Sound Editors
Lou Angelo
Simon Coke
Teri E. Dorman
Andy Kopetzky
Larry Mann
Nash Michael
Bob Newlan
Rodger Pardee
Gary Wright
David A. Arnold
Gordon Davidson
Michael Haight
Dave Kulczycki
Chuck Michael
Harry Miller III
Mark Pappas
Karen Wilson

Supervising ADR Editor
Lauren Palmer

ADR Editors
Susan Dudeck
Jerelyn J. Harding
Denise Horrt
Robert Ulrich

Sound Re-recording
Recordists
Brad Biggart
Brion Pacassi

ADR Recordist
Rick Canelli

Foley Recordist
Nerses Gezalayan

Sound Mixer
Keith A. Webster

ADR Mixer
Thomas J. O'Connell

Foley Mixer
Jim Ashwill

Music Recordist/Mixer
Bruce Botnick

Sound Re-recording Mixers
Steve Maslow
Gregg Landaker

Foley Artists
Dan O'Connell
Gary Hecker

Stunt Co-ordinators
R. A. Rondell
Kevin Costner
Norman Howell

2nd Unit:
Chad Randall

Marine Co-ordinator
Ransom Walrod

Trimaran Co-ordinators
Bruce Belmont
Barry Idoine

Underwater Tank Co-ordinator
Doug Merrifield

Armourers
Harry Lou
Dan Sprague
Syd Stembbridge

Cast
Kevin Costner
Mariner
Chaim Jeraffi
Drifter
Nic Aviles
Henry Kapono Ka'aihue
Tracy Anderson
Gatesmen
R. D. Call
Enforcer
Zitto Kazann
Leonardo Cimino
Sab Shimono
Elders
Zitto Kazann
Survivor
Zakes Mokae
Priam
Luke Ka'ili Jnr
Anthony DeMasters
Willy Petrovic
Boys
Jack Kehler
Banker
Jeanne Tripplehorn
Helen

Lanny Flaherty
Trader
Robert Silverman
Hydroholic
Gerard Murphy
Nord
Tina Majorino
Enola
Rita Zahar
Chris Bouridas
Atollers
Michael Jeter
Gregor
August Neves
Old Atoller
Dennis Hopper
Deacon
Neil Giuntoli
Hellfire Gunner
Robert Joy
Ledge Guy
John Fleck
Doctor
David Finnegan
Toby
Gregory B. Goossen
Sawzall Smoker

Guy William Preston
Depth Gauge
Jack Black
Pilot
John Toles-Bey
Plane Gunner
Kim Coates
Drifter
Ari Barak
Atoll Man
Alexa Jago
Atoll Woman
Sean Whalen
Bone
Robert LeSardo
Smitty
Lee Arenberg
Djeng
Doug Spinuzza
Truan

12060 feet
134 minutes

DTS stereo
In colour
Deluxe
Anamorphic

Sometime in the future, the polar ice caps have melted and the entire known world has been flooded. A lone Mariner goes into the Atoll (a floating settlement made out of scrap) to trade some handfuls of dirt, the most valuable commodity in Waterworld, for water and a tomato plant. When the Mariner refuses the offer of a woman so that he can add to the Atoll's gene pool, the settlers sieze and examine him. Discovering him to be mutant with webbed feet and functioning gills, they cage him. When the Atoll is attacked by Smokers (piratical terrorists) led by Deacon, the dictator of a slave colony, the Mariner's cage falls into a quicksand recycler. Helen, the seller of supplies, and Enola, her adopted daughter, rescue the mariner on condition he takes them with him on his boat. Enola is being pursued by Deacon because she has a map tattooed on her back which supposedly indicates the way to the mythic Dryland.

As the Mariner's supplies are low, he suggests to Helen that they throw the child overboard. Helen offers him her body if he'll let Enola stay; he declines her offer, but lets them both remain. Enola drives the Mariner to distraction by talking all the time but they eventually bond. When they are on the verge of starving, the Mariner uses himself as live bait and catch a monster fish. A passing trader wants to swap some paper for sex with Helen, and the Mariner agrees at first but then changes his mind. The Smokers spring a trap on them but they escape. To prove that there is no Dryland, the Mariner takes Helen in an ad hoc bathysphere to the ocean floor past the detritus of a submerged city.

They emerge to find Deacon and the Smokers aboard the trimaran and Enola in hiding. Enola gives herself away but the Mariner and Helen escape, he breathing for her underwater. The trimaran is left a wreck but the mariner finds a drawing that Enola has made showing a tree and flowers that match photos in a copy of *National Geographic* magazine that he has - therefore Dryland must exist. He and Helen are rescued by her Atoll friend, Gregor, an old inventor who takes them by balloon to a craft full of Atoll survivors.

They refuse to help rescue Enola so the Mariner goes alone to the Slave Colony which inhabits the huge rusting hulk of an oil tanker. The Mariner destroys the Colony, rescues Enola and they are picked up by Helen and Gregor. They finally decipher Enola's tattoo and find Dryland. However, the Mariner decides that he does not belong on solid ground and heads out to sea alone.

Waterworld illustrates well why audiences generally prefer big-budget movies: if a film as banal and badly scripted as this one did not have expensive stars and production values, it would be unwatchable. In *Waterworld*, the gorgeous photography, the vast sets, the special effects and the presence of Kevin Costner and Dennis Hopper enable us to overlook, at least momentarily, the triteness of the whole enterprise. *Waterworld* is a very enjoyable entertainment, even, or perhaps especially, when one is laughing at it.

The film is a high concept one - *Mad Max* in the water instead of in the desert, with Kevin as Mel. It's not a bad concept, as far as these things go. The *Mad Max* films were funnier and had a sexual edge. But it has been so long since one last saw humour or edgy sexuality in a film starring the very earnest Mr. Costner (probably *Bull Durham*) that one has ceased to expect them. What is surprising is that Costner has no character to play. George Miller gave us enough information to know and understand why Max was mad, but the Mariner is a cipher. We know he has no kin and that he is a mutant. We don't know whether there are many others like him, who his family were and what happened to them, or what he longs for and desires. His love scene with Helen is passionless, perfunctory, and very brief. When he is not fighting someone, he generally stands erect at the top of trimaran looking mysteriously at the horizon while a wild wind blows his long hair. It is typical of this fuzzy-headed film to deal in such bankrupt archetypes. The Mariner is a mythic lone warrior à la Robert Bly.

The film's major fault seems to be the script. The story doesn't really work as sci-fi: it doesn't provide the necessary detail on character, situation or setting for us to be able to see a parallel between this imagined future and our own present. It is amazing that a radical change in a world doesn't create other ways of being: the film sees society as made up of 'responsible' citizens, gangsters and heroes; and gender as constituted by macho men and mothering women. The film could have made up for this shortcoming visually, but it doesn't. The design and photography, probably the best aspects of the film, brilliantly execute a shoddy notion but they do not transform it. The scene where we get to see the sunken city is a particular disappointment - however much it cost, it looks low-budget, perhaps because it is so brief. Surely the ruins of our present world could have been given a few more seconds of screen time. Aside from this, the film



Wheezy rider: Dennis Hopper

denies us story information that matters: how did Enola get to the Atoll colony? How did Deacon become so powerful? Where does everyone get the seemingly endless supply of cigarettes? And there are plot holes as well – what happens to the sharks we see when Helen and the Mariner are about to surface? Are they merely part of the Smokers who capture Enola?

Despite all the water, *Waterworld* has no depth. It is hard to disagree with the film's pro-environment stance, but when it is articulated as 'irresponsibility and greed destroyed the world', it becomes too banal to be taken seriously. Where did the film-makers get that bit of wisdom? Crystals? Worse still, the film patronises its audience by clunkily spelling out its ever-so-important message – it is bad enough that the young girl is named after the *Enola Gay*, the plane which carried the Hiroshima atomic bomb, but when the Slave Colony sinks and a big close-up informs us that it is the remains of the *Exxon Valdez*, the disastrous Alaskan oil-tanker, I felt I'd been beamed into moronland.

The film is at its funniest when it is at its most serious. This is often when the film attempts to depict relationships (though not exclusively, as when we know they've discovered Dryland because we get a close-up of a pristine seagull aboard the balloon, descended from the misty heavens). I think this may be because the film goes to great lengths at the beginning to show Costner as unemotional. Perhaps it is also that the film-makers can only conceive of relationships as Hallmark slogans. That Helen tries to save Enola by taking her own clothes off and offering her body to the Mariner is an embarrassing cliché. But when the film-makers telegraph that the Mariner can now 'feel' by having him travel a great distance and single-handedly kill an army because "she's my friend", embarrassment is forsaken in favour of giggles.

Waterworld is a vanity production. Costner is at the centre of practically every shot, lovingly photographed to give the audience the best possible vantage-points from which to see Costner as courageous, as fair-minded, doing the right thing, and saving the world all by himself without expecting personal gain. This could have been as entertaining as reading the US Constitution. Contrary to expectation, however, watching Costner in *Waterworld* is a lot of fun. The role of the Mariner requires a lot of jumping, leaping and swinging from ropes at sea. The film has constructed these physical tests on Costner as little set-pieces in themselves and he passes them swimmingly. As demonstrated by fond memories of Douglas Fairbanks and other swash-bucklers, (and as a possible explanation of stars' continued assertions that they perform their own stunts in spite of endless lists of stunt people in the final credits), watching agile, powerful bodies in motion is an audience-pleaser worth a bag of special effects. Here, Costner brings to mind Burt Lancaster in *The Crimson Pirate* minus the exuberance and teeth.

Costner, however, is only one of the film's pleasures. Dennis Hopper's been there and done something like the character of Deacon many times before, but it's hard to get enough of a good thing. The film's visuals have to be among the most beautiful in the cinema. And *Waterworld* contains several extremely entertaining set-pieces (the introduction with the Mariner drinking his own urine, the Mariner putting the trimaran in motion, the Mariner using himself as fish-bait) and action scenes (the water-skiing, the Mariner rescuing Enola by bungee-jumping from a balloon) that will long be remembered. All of this is perhaps not worth the film's budget (it definitely does not constitute Art), but I think it is well worth the price of admission.

José Arroyo

While You Were Sleeping

USA 1995

Director: Jon Turteltaub

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Buena Vista

Production Company

Hollywood Pictures

Company

In association with

Caravan Pictures

Executive Producers

Arthur Sarkissian

Steve Barron

Producers

Joe Roth

Roger Birnbaum

Co-producers

Charles J. D. Schlissel

Susan Stremple

Associate Producers

Jonathan Glickman

Elaine Johnson

Production Supervisor

Katherine E. Beyda

Production Co-ordinator

Melissa K. Cooper

Unit Production Manager

Charles J. D. Schlissel

Location Manager

Don J. Hug

Head of Production

Ned Dowd

Post-production Manager

Pat Rand

Assistant Directors

Bruce Franklin

Sandra M. Middleton

Aiman Humaidh

Script Supervisor

Alicia Accardo

Casting

Amanda Mackey

Cathy Sandrich

Associate:

Elizabeth Lang

Screenplay

Daniel G. Sullivan

Frederic Lebow

Director of Photography

Phedon Papamichael

Camera Operator

Walter Pfister

Editor

Bruce Green

Production Designer

Garrett Stover

Art Director

Chris Cornwell

Set Design

Susan Wexler

Set Decorator

Larry Dias

Special Effects Co-ordinator

Guy Clayton Jnr

Costume Design

Betsy Cox

Costume Supervisor

Kimberly Guenther

Make-up Supervisor

Pamela S. Westmore

Key Hairstylist

Elaina P. Schulman

Title Design

Robert Dawson

Titles/Opticals

Buena Vista Imaging

Music

Randy Edelman

Orchestrations

Ralph Ferraro

Music Editor

John La Salandra

Music Consultant

Elton Ahi

Songs

"This Will Be (An Everlasting Love)"

by Charles Jackson,

Marvin Yancy,

performed by Natalie

Cole; "Merry Merry

Christmas" by and

performed by Koko

Taylor; "Winter

Wonderland" by Felix

Bernard, Dick Smith,

"Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow" by Sammy Cahn, Jule Styne, performed by The Glenn Miller Orchestra; "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" by Hugh Martin, Ralph Blane, performed by Ella Fitzgerald; "I'm Your Santa" by Ed Williams, James Young, Bruce Iglaue, performed by Lil' Ed and The Blue Imperials; "Wherever I Would Be" by Diane Warren, performed by Dusty Springfield, Daryl Hall

Production Sound

Curt Frisk

Supervising Sound Editor

J. Paul Huntsman

Dialogue Editors

Adam Sawelson

Benjamin Beardwood

Gary Lewis

Supervising ADR

James Beshears

Supervising Foley

Jeffrey Rosen

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Stephen Janisz

Foley Editor

Gary Mundheim

Foley Mixer

Dean Drabin

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Ann Hadsell

Music Mixer

Dennis Sands

Sound Re-recording Mixers

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Joe Earle

Bruce Tranis

Foley Artists

Robin Harlan

Sarah Monat

ADR Group

L. A. MadDogs

Technical Adviser

Sidney Edwards

Stunt Co-ordinator

Rick Le Feuvre

Cast

Sandra Bullock

Lucy Moderatz

Dill Pullman

Jack Callaghan

Peter Gallagher

Peter Callaghan

Peter Boyle

Ox

Jack Warden

Saul

Glynis Johns

Elsie

Micole Mercurio

Midge

Jason Bernard

Jerry

Michael Nispoli

Joe Jnr

Ally Walker

Ashley Bacon

Monica Keena

Mary

Ruth Rudnick

Wanda

Marcia Wright

Celeste

Dick Cusack

Dr Rubin

Thomas Q. Morris

Man in Peter's Room

Bernie Landis

Doorman

James Krag

Dalton Clarke

Rick Worth

Orderly

Marc Grapey

Intern

Joel Hatch

Priest

Mike Bacarella

Mr Fusco

Peter Siragusa

Hot Dog Vendor

Gene Janson

Man in Church

Krista Lally

Phyllis

Kevin Gudahl

Cop at ICU

Ann Whitney

Blood Donor Nurse

Margaret Travolta

Admitting Nurse

Shea Farrell

Ashley's Husband

Kate Reinders

Beth

Susan Messing

Celeste's Friend

Richard Pickren

Lucy's Father

Megan Schaefer

Young Lucy

9,295 feet

103 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Prints by

Technicolor

Lucy Moderatz works in a ticket booth on Chicago's elevated railway run by the Chicago Transit Authority, where she fantasises about Peter Callaghan, a smart lawyer who buys a token from her every day. On Christmas Day, Peter is mugged on the platform, and Lucy saves him from being run over after he falls on the line. At the hospital where Peter lies in a coma, Lucy is mistaken for his fiancée by the Callaghan family, who insist that she come home to celebrate Christmas with them. There she meets Peter's brother, Jack. Jack grows suspicious of Lucy when he visits her apartment, where her slobbish Italian-American landlord, Joe Junior, pretends that he is Lucy's boyfriend. After being given Peter's effects at the hospital, Lucy lets herself into his apartment to feed his cat, and bumps into Jack, who tries in vain to catch her out.

Back at the hospital, Peter's godfather, Saul, tells Lucy he knows she isn't really Peter's fiancée; but since the family like her so much, he agrees to keep it a secret. Jack comes round to Lucy's again to deliver a sofa his parents want to give her; after his van is boxed in by parked cars, they spend the evening together. Giving Lucy a lift to the New Year's Eve party of one of her work-mates, Jack is mistaken for her fiancée, whom they have heard about but of course never met. Meanwhile, Peter's ex-girlfriend Ashley has returned from Europe and is leaving messages on his answerphone. Back at the hospital, Peter wakes up; when he does not recognise Lucy, his family assume he is suffering from amnesia. Feeling he wants to start afresh after his narrow escape from death, he proposes to Lucy anyway. Before the wedding, Jack goes round to see Lucy, but they still can't bring themselves to declare their feelings for each other. At the registry office, Lucy interrupts the marriage ceremony, confessing all and running off when Ashley arrives to object to the wedding. With the whole family in tow, Jack finds Lucy working at the ticket booth and proposes. She accepts.

A plotline in which a protagonist passes herself off as the fiancée of a comatose accident victim is one more associated with film noir than comedy – last year's Spanish thriller *The Red Squirrel* and the wonderful 1949 Bar-

◀ bara Stanwyck vehicle *No Man Of Her Own* are two that come to mind. But this resolutely good-natured romantic comedy avoids a single jarring note of darkness. It's Christmas. Peter's family, the Callaghans, live in a white clapboard house in the suburbs, complete with snow and fairy lights. There's kissing under the mistletoe, and 'Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas' on the soundtrack. The synthetic feel of this modern fairy tale is only enhanced by the ethnic mix of the characters, which seems to have been worked out by an equal opportunities committee: the Callaghans are Irish-American; Peter's godfather, Saul, is Jewish; Lucy's landlord, Joe Junior, is Italian-American; and Jerry, her worldly-wise boss at the Chicago Transit Authority, is African-American.

Despite its slightly Benetton view of American society, however, *While You Were Sleeping* does not advocate class mobility. Lucy may think Peter is her "Prince Charming", but he is shown to be out of bounds, a rich, hotshot lawyer with an icy apartment decorated in chrome and black and white. In a bizarre detail, Peter also turns out to have only one testicle, as if a lawyer were only half a man. Lucy's landlord Joe Junior, by contrast, is too far down-market: he wears his trousers at half-mast, builder-style, and wants to take Lucy to the Ice Capades. (In case that weren't enough, he also has a penchant for women's shoes.)

Lucy, after all, may work in a ticket booth, but she isn't really working class: as the film is at pains to point out, she had to leave college to work so that she could pay her late father's medical bills. Like a computer dating service, the plot fixes her up with her perfect social match, Jack Callaghan, who loves his family, but not to the point of devoting his whole life to the slightly distasteful family business (which is dealing in dead people's furniture). Instead he wants to go into business for himself, selling the chairs he makes with his own hands. Best of all, he reminds Lucy of her father. How perfect.

Produced by Disney offshoot Hollywood Pictures, *While You Were Sleeping* has a homogenised, family values feel that puts it firmly in the Disney tradition, as does the presence of Glynis Johns – the mother in Disney's *Mary Poppins* – as Peter and Jack's grandmother, Elsie. That it still manages to charm is thanks entirely to the perfect casting of Sandra Bullock and Bill Pullman, both getting a well-deserved shot at lead roles after years of support and both seizing the moment. With her tight little smile and a winning capacity for looking like she wants to disappear off the face of the earth in embarrassing situations, Bullock manages to make Lucy both plausibly ordinary and, as Jack puts it, "Really, really likeable". But it's something else Jack says about Lucy that really pinpoints Bullock's brand of wholesome sexiness: "You don't know whether to kiss her or arm-wrestle her."

John Wrathall

The Young Poisoner's Handbook

United Kingdom 1994

Director: Benjamin Ross

Certificate

the Distributor
Electric Pictures
Production Companies
Mass

Productions/Kinowelt/
Haut et Court
With participation of
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Supported by
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Matthew Baker
Dirk Piepenbrung
Jez Murell

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Lesley Cross
Casting
Michelle Guish
Screenplay
Jeff Rawle
Benjamin Ross

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Hubert Taczanowski
Camera Operator
Ian Jackson
Editor
Anne Soper
Production Designer
Maria Djurkovic
Art Directors
Mark Stevenson
Germany:
Matthias Kammermeier

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Stuart Drisden
Costume Design
Stewart Meachem
Wardrobe Supervisor
Catherine Halloran
Make-up Designer
Lindy Shaw
Titles/Opticals
Capital FX

MUSIC
Robert Lane
Frank Strobel
Music Performed by
Munich Symphony
Orchestra
Songs/Music Extracts
"Peanut Butter" by
Barnham, Cooper,
Smith, Goldsmith;

"Dickie Boon" by
Rob Lane; "Why" by
De Angelis, Marcucci;
"Nut Rocker" by Kim
Fowley; "Hoots Mon"
by Robertson; "He
Who Would Valiant Be"
(traditional); "Cross
My Heart" by Wiener,
Brandon; "Nothing
Shaking But The
Leaves on The Trees"
by Fontaine, Colarai,
Lampart, Gluck;
"Swedish Rhapsody"
by Alfven, Adapt, Faith;
"Livin' In The Past"
by Ian Anderson;
"My Baby Loves Lovin'"
by Roger Cook, Roger
Greenaway; "The Green
Green Grass of Home"
by Putnam; "Low
Rider" by F. Allen, H.
Brown, M. Dickerson,
L. Jordan, C. Miller,
L. Oskar, H. Scott, J.
Goldstein; "For He's a
Jolly Good Fellow"
(traditional); "Je T'aime
Moi Non Plus" by Serge
Gainsbourg; "Tijuana
Babe" by Warren
Bennett; "Come Ye
Sons of Art Away"
by Henry Purcell

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Gerald McCann
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Dubbing Mixer
Paul Hamblin
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Stephen Barker
Stunt Co-ordinator
Andy Bradford

Cast
Hugh O'Conor
Graham
Anthony Sher
Dr Zeigler
Ruth Sheen
Molly
Roger Lloyd Pack
Fred
Charlotte Coleman
Winnie
Paul Stacey
Dennis
Samantha Edmonds
Sue
Vilma Hollingberry
Aunt Panty
Frank Mills
Uncle Jack
Charlie Creed-Miles
Berridge
Arthur Cox
Ray
John Thomson
Nathan
Jean Warren
Debra
Simon Kunz
John
Frank Coda
Billy
Tim Potter
Simon
Hazel Douglas
Edna
Roger Frost
Geoff
Norman Caro
Mr Goetz

Robert Lane; "Why" by
De Angelis, Marcucci;
"Nut Rocker" by Kim
Fowley; "Hoots Mon"
by Robertson; "He
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(traditional); "Cross
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Malcolm Sinclair
Dr Trifus
John Abbott
Chairman
Cate Fowler
Social Services Lady
David Saville
Chief Medical Inspector

Tobias Arnold
Young Graham
Joost Siedhoff
Dr Scott
Anna Kollenda
Chairman
Katja Kollenda
Baby Donna

the feet
the minutes

Dolby stereo
in colour

Neasden, 1961. While the rest of the Young family watches television, 14-year-old Graham experiments with his chemistry set. He also devours scientific texts, helped by young librarian Sue who gives him restricted reading material. His eye is caught by antimony which, when heated, is transformed into a diamond-shaped crystal. However, Graham's experiment fails. Later, jealous of his school friend Mick, who has had a date with Sue, Graham offers him a poisoned ham sandwich. With Mick violently ill, Graham is able to take Sue out. However his chosen topic of conversation – car crashes – frightens her away.

Back at home, stepmother Molly wrongly accuses Graham of hoarding a pile of porn magazines, and scrubs him raw. In feigned apology, he offers Molly chocolates laced with poison. She becomes ill and Graham laces her prescribed medicine with antimony; he also slips some belladonna in to his sister Winnie's eyewash, leaving her blind in one eye. Molly dies and a series of family illnesses provokes suspicions.

Graham is arrested, convicted of murder and sent to a mental hospital for the criminally insane. There, he attracts the attention of a Dr Zeigler, who encourages him to disclose the content of his dreams. He gets a fellow inmate, Berridge, to tell him his dreams. Berridge ends up committing suicide. Real dreams, fixated on diamond crystals, follow for Graham, and Zeigler concludes that his pathology dates from the failed antimony experiment, and so he helps him complete it.

After eight years, Graham wins parole. He secures a job at a photographic lab. After spying some thallium in the lab, he is soon lacing his colleagues' tea. Two die, and his work is only interrupted when the labs' tea mugs are changed from individualised ones to identical Union Jack mugs. He is locked up, and writes a handbook for Dr Zeigler, whose reputation is ruined. Finally, Graham files down a 'diamond' ring, once his mother's, and poisons himself with the resulting glass powder.

● If crimes have their favourite places, poisoning prefers the suburbs. Fact and fiction persuade us that it's a crime committed by ordinary looking folk, and executed in the most mundane fashion – something extra in a cup of tea. Nigel Williams' 1990 novel, *The Wimbledon Poisoner*, later

adapted for television, played on these conventions. Benjamin Ross' excellent debut feature also chooses the suburbs, this time north of the river Thames in Neasden.

Ross, a Londoner and graduate of Columbia Film School, quickly establishes the feel of the "everyday grotesque", a popular style option since *Blue Velvet*, especially in American movies. In this defiantly British variant, the grotesque is evoked through more than just an impeccable *mise en scène*. With the help of some fine acting, the script deftly captures the claustrophobia of the Young home. It's a house of petty resentments, of pathetic but hard-fought battles, a world bound by arguments over facial hair remover and soft porn magazines.

Such a set-up is ripe for comedy. The Young family emerges from the land of British sitcom, its collection of types instantly recognisable. The moralising, feckless father with a stash of soft porn should come with a heritage stamp marked across his forehead. Yet the familiar is unusually packaged. There's a pervading sense of unease, and the humour offers no release, carrying instead a sinister undertow. Ross and his co-writer Jeff Rawle (who plays George in *Drop The Dead Donkey*) slip evil into the everyday. Although his stepmother is a fierce disciplinarian, Graham does not seem to suffer the great traumas we now expect from a serial killer's past. We are not given a long history of deprivation and abuse. Instead, it is Graham's obsession with science that becomes the key, shaping influence. In his increasing fascination with what he might achieve, he begins to view people as so many guinea pigs.

Again, Ross inscribes this obsession in the homely. While Graham is being turned on by the possibilities of his experiments, all the family sees is an unusually clever child, a force for good, a "little Louis Pasteur". And when Graham documents the effects of the poison on his stepmother, he does so in the manner of an endearing swot. He keeps a nice, clean book; writes in an elegant hand; and draws carefully the graph of Molly's decline. He is the killer as model schoolboy.

Of course, once Graham is caught and is observed by Zeigler, some traumatic event is sought as an explanation for his killing ways. Zeigler traces Graham's "turn" to the antimony experiment which went wrong: Graham was trying to create beauty, and it blew up in his face. The film deals a pretty thorough blow to Zeigler's "science" of dream-reading. What's more, as if in passing, the film questions the Enlightenment assumption that to acquire knowledge is to move away from evil. When the camera intrudes briefly into Graham's room, we note an interest in atrocity photographs and glimpse cuttings which seem to commemorate the Final Solution. Ross is wise not to make too much of the links. Instead, he sustains beautifully the grotesque, near-comedy, and lets the viewer work on the connections.

Robert Yates

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Mark Kermode and Geoffrey Macnab highlight their ten video choices of the month, and overleaf review, respectively, the rest of the rental and retail releases

VIDEO CHOICE

Fear Eats the Soul (Angst essen Seele auf)

Rainer Werner Fassbinder/West Germany 1973

A Moroccan immigrant worker living in Germany falls in love with and marries an elderly cleaning woman after a chance meeting in a Munich bar. Critics have made much of Fassbinder's debt to Hollywood melodrama; the plot may allude to *All That Heaven Allows*, but it lacks the swirling Technicolor opulence that made Douglas Sirk's 1955 film such a heady experience. This is an austere piece of storytelling, without extravagant camera movement, music or dialogue. It is also a very gentle affair – for a film-

maker reputed to be a monster in real life, Fassbinder treats his characters with surprising tenderness. His lover of the time, El Hedi Ben Salem, is dignified and ingenuous as Ali, the immigrant worker, while former cabaret star, Brigitte Mira, plays the old widow, Emmi, in reticent, understated fashion. Fassbinder pops up as the widow's son-in-law, a malingering, racist layabout, rigidly opposed to the couple's marriage. The film goes to great lengths to detail the petty hostility the couple encounter from friends, colleagues and family, and implicitly from German society as a whole. (MFB No. 490)

● Retail: Connoisseur Video; £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15



Boundaries: Brigitte Mira, El Hedi Ben Salem



Life saver: Meryl Streep

The River Wild

Curtis Hanson/USA 1994

A modern family, haplessly falling apart at the seams, is brought together during a rafting vacation which turns into a battle for survival. Essentially a tame reworking of John Boorman's *Deliverance* in which none of the good guys are raped or killed and even the dog survives, this action romp finds director Curtis Hanson (*The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*) in his element. A muscular Meryl Streep goes for gold as the matriarch who navigates white-water rapids and fends off crazed criminals in defence of her beloved brood. Some cracking photography by Robert Elswit, an efficient, by-numbers script from Denis O'Neill and an utter disregard for plausibility make this top-notch blockbuster entertainment. (S&S January 1995)

● Rental: Universal; Certificate 12

The Shawshank Redemption

Frank Darabont/USA 1994

Stephen King's non-horror fiction often transfers more successfully to the big screen (for example, *Stand By Me*) than his best-selling horror writing. In this adaptation of a King short story, Tim Robbins excels as banker Andy Dufresne. Wrongly convicted of murdering his wife, he is left to rot in the ominous Shawshank prison where he meets resident 'fixer' Red (an imposing Morgan Freeman) who teaches him to cope with

life inside. Meanwhile, the verminous warden (Bob Gunton, splendidly horrid) exploits Dufresne's accountancy skills for his own nefarious ends. Superbly written and directed by Frank Darabont, this Oscar-nominated gem boasts an epic emotional sweep despite the claustrophobic confines of its prison setting. There are moments of genuine nastiness (Andy's prison rape although visually discreet is very gruelling), but the overall tone is solidly positive. This augurs well for the director's forthcoming film, *Dolores Claiborne*. (S&S February 1995)

● Rental: Guild; Certificate 15



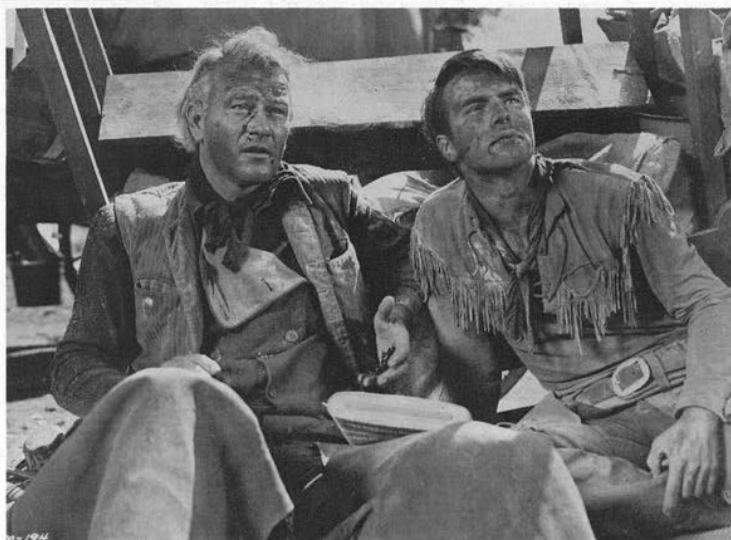
Rough justice: Tim Robbins

Being Human

Bill Forsyth/USA 1994

"Perhaps I should have just written a poem rather than making a multi-million dollar movie," was writer-director Bill Forsyth's rueful assessment of this troubled epic which failed to receive a theatrical release in the UK. Forsyth takes a brave stab at conveying how humankind is linked through the centuries – from the stone age to the present day – by shared emotions. The central character, Robin Williams, is placed amid a series of historical vignettes, each of which provokes a familiar emotional response. Considered unfathomable by American preview audiences, Forsyth's *folie de grandeur* was removed from his control by the studio, but was returned to his care with the proviso that he provide an explanatory voice-over. Sadly, the verbal meandering of Theresa Russell (who reads what amounts to a lyrical poem over the film) does little to clarify the situation, and instead adds to the overall impression that it has been salvaged, rather than finished. The result is a disappointment made all the more acute by the flashes of directorial brilliance which suggest that it could have worked. This most engaging of directors should return to the low-budget roots which first nurtured his extraordinary talent.

● Rental Premiere: Warner; Producers Robert F. Colesberry, David Putnam; Screenplay Bill Forsyth; Lead Actors Robin Williams, John Turturro, Vincent D'Onofrio



Driven men: John Wayne, Montgomery Clift

Red River

Howard Hawks/USA 1948

"I didn't know the sonofabitch could act," John Ford is reputed to have remarked after seeing John Wayne in this breathtaking Western. Wayne, as Tom Dunson, plays an accentuated version of his monumental, bullying self. Dunson is an obsessive leader determined to complete his cattle drive to Missouri. When his men start deserting and his surrogate son (Montgomery Clift) strips him of his command, he assumes a dazed

manic look, a driven quality, which he only ever matched again in *The Searchers*. The West has seldom been more evocatively photographed – see, for instance, cinematographer Russell Harlan's long pan, encompassing cattle, wagons and cowboys as the drive is about to begin. Hawks is equally at home filming epic stampedes as he is extracting comedy from jokes about Walter Brennan's false teeth. Only the mawkish ending strikes a false note. (MFB No. 180)

● Retail: MGM/UA; £12.99; B/W; Certificate U



Stormy weather: Toyah Willcox as Miranda

The Tempest

Derek Jarman/UK 1979

Jarman's screen adaptation of Shakespeare's play makes an interesting companion piece to *Prospero's Books*, Peter Greenaway's stab at the same material. Both film-makers possess a painterly eye, and both are experimental, but Jarman's work has a rough, improvisatory quality very different to Greenaway's formalism. Here, he borrows from German expressionism (interiors are dimly lit and Jack Birkett's bald, egg-sucking Caliban looks as if he has stepped out from *Nosferatu*); punk rock (Toyah Willcox makes for a very idiosyncratic Miranda)

and Renaissance art. There's even a Gene Kelly-style finale with a group of sailors dancing a merry jig as Elisabeth Welch croons 'Stormy Weather'. Shot on a shoestring, this has the same freewheeling energy that characterises Jarman's 8mm shorts. There's some exquisite imagery (for instance, a naked, bedraggled Ferdinand wandering out of the sea after the shipwreck, and Prospero scanning a map with his magical magnifying glass) bolstered by colourful performances. This may not be Shakespeare for purists, but it is bursting with invention. (MFB No. 555)

● Retail: Art House; Price £12.99; Certificate 15

Disclosure

Barry Levinson/USA 1994

Can a woman sexually harass a man? Can Michael Crichton keep churning out best-selling novels for the big screen? Is Demi Moore still the most impressive star presence in a series of otherwise rather silly Hollywood blockbusters? Watching *Disclosure*, the answer has to be yes to all of the above. Despite director Barry Levinson's po-faced posturing on the issue of sexual politics, *Disclosure*'s real success is as a glossy, upmarket cinema equivalent of the straight-to-video erotic thriller. It is far more suited to the small screen, where it comes across as top quality trash as opposed to the 'talking point' film of the cinema release. Michael Douglas drives on auto-pilot as a victimised man on the wrong side of Demi Moore's lustful ambitions, and Donald Sutherland gives ponderous support as Moore's and Douglas'

morally unstable boss. Amiably hokey at first, the plot begins to come unstuck at the end when it attempts to mutate into a high-tech thriller about virtual reality with disastrous results. Fun while it lasted, though.

(S&S March 1995) □

● Rental: Warner; Certificate 18



In too deep: Michael Douglas, Demi Moore

Dirty Weekend

Michael Winner/UK 1992

In grimy downtown Brighton, a young woman is harassed by an obscene phone-caller and decides to take the law into her own hands with violent results. Adapted from Helen Zahavi's scathingly satirical novel, Michael Winner's best work in years offers a post-feminist twist on his much maligned 1974 film, *Death Wish*. The politically incorrect Winner was criticised for even approaching the material, a debate which eclipsed the film's virtues. Public spats between Winner and leading actress Lia Williams didn't help matters, nor did the BBFC's perfunctory banning of the video release in the wake of the James Bulger case. After 18 months of BBFC deliberation, *Dirty Weekend* finally arrives on the small screen, cut by one minute and 22 seconds. Unsurprisingly, the result is not the film which was intended. Oh well, that's the Criminal Justice Act for you.

(S&S October 1993)

● Rental: PolyGram; Certificate 18

A Better Tomorrow

John Woo/Hong Kong 1986

Reputedly the top grossing movie in Hong Kong history, this blistering thriller marked John Woo's emergence as a film-maker with a style and vision all his own. The action sequences are ingeniously choreographed and have the same delirious momentum as *Road Runner* or *Tom & Jerry* cartoons (there is one fight in which the characters use kitchen implements; and another in which Chow Yun-Fat blasts his way down a corridor, plucking guns from flower pots). But take away the bloody set-pieces and the film would still stand up. Equally impressive is Woo's attention to character. This is essentially a family melodrama, concerning two brothers on opposite sides of the law, both of whom have curiously old fashioned ideas about loyalty and decency.

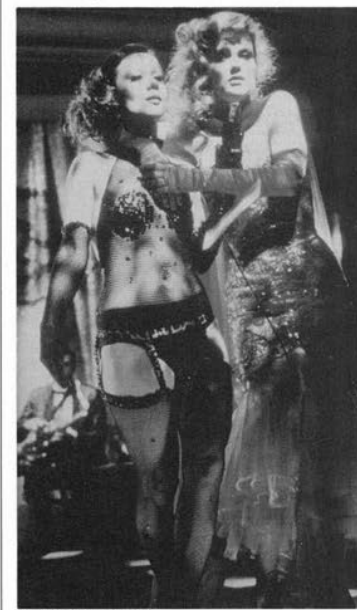
● Retail Premiere: Hong Kong Classics; £12.99; Widescreen; Subtitles; Certificate 18; 101 minutes; Producer Tsui Hark; Screenplay Chan Hing Kai, Leung Suk Wah; Lead Actors Chow Yun-Fat, Ti Lung, Leslie Cheung

Lola

Rainer Werner Fassbinder/West Germany 1981

This is Fassbinder in a playful mood. Set in provincial Germany during the 50s, the lead characters are corrupt building contractors, pettifogging officials and dowdy secretaries. They find respite from the monotony of their lives in the Villa Fink, a local nightclub/brothel where the glamorous and very venal Lola (Barbara Sukowa) holds sway. This allows for a mind-boggling collision of visual styles; the town itself is grey, whereas the Villa Fink is a magical, kitsch world, reminiscent of Von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel*. As a satire on Germany's much-vaunted economic miracle, *Lola* is only fitfully effective. The villain Schuckert (Mario Adorf) may look like a bloated bourgeois but his swaggering charisma steals the film from the ostensible hero, Public Works Commissioner Von Bohm (Armin Mueller-Stahl). Still, such distinctions soon blur as Fassbinder, at his most cynical, seems to argue that there aren't any heroes. With Lola and easy money to tempt them, everybody is corruptible. (MFB No. 579)

● Retail: Connoisseur Video; £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15



Blue angels: 'Lola'

Reviews in Monthly Film Bulletin and Sight and Sound are cited in parentheses. A retail video that has previously been reviewed in the rental section will be listed only and the film review reference given. The term 'Premiere' refers to a film that has had no prior UK theatrical release and is debuting on video. □ denotes closed captioning facility

Rental

Andre

George Miller; USA 1994; 20.20 Vision; Certificate U

A harbour master whose little daughter befriends an orphaned seal gets into hot water with the local seal-hating fisherman. Based on a true story, this has an annoying child, a ghastly script and tiresome scenes of a performing seal in a hat. (S&S March 1995)

I.Q.

Fred Schepisi; USA 1994; Paramount; Certificate PG

In this throwaway, but none the less thoroughly enjoyable romantic comedy, Meg Ryan and Tim Robbins make an endearing double-act as mismatched lovers. A car mechanic, besotted by Albert Einstein's niece, embarks on a hare-brained scheme to win her affection and steal her away from her stuffy English boyfriend (Stephen Fry). Walter Matthau is effortlessly amusing as the mad scientist desperate to see true love prevail. (S&S March 1995)

Just Cause

Arnie Glimcher; USA 1995; Warner; Certificate 18

A high-powered lawyer agrees to defend a death row prisoner despite the evidence against him, and comes into conflict with the cop responsible for convicting the man. Adapted from John Katzenbach's best-selling novel, this impressively nasty thriller resembles a John Grisham pot-boiler with sharp teeth. Director Arnie Glimcher clearly relishes the twists and turns of the plot, and cinematographer Lajos Koltai makes the most of the atmospheric locations. Splendid straight-faced performances by Sean Connery and Laurence Fishburne perfectly complement Ed Harris' deliciously crazy psycho turn. (S&S May 1995) □

The Neverending Story III

Peter Macdonald; USA/Germany 1994; Warner; Certificate PG

Jason James Richter goes 15 rounds with a group of gigantic talking puppets in the third instalment of the increasingly uninteresting *Neverending Story* series. Charming creature effects, lavish production values (in spite of the low budget) and a few heart-warming jokes make this bearable kids' fare. (S&S January 1995)

The Pagemaster

Maurice Hunt/Jo Johnston; USA 1994; Columbia TriStar; Certificate U

Macaulay Culkin learns to face his innermost fears when he is turned into a cartoon character during a visit to a seemingly ordinary library. Dreary animation, washed out colours and an uninventive script make this stodgy viewing for kids and adults alike. (S&S February 1995)

Priest

Antonia Bird; UK 1994; PolyGram; Certificate 15

A young priest wrestles with his barely repressed homosexuality, and anguishes over his confessional vow of silence after discovering a member of his parish is committing incest. Bombastically written by Jimmy McGovern, passionately directed by Antonia Bird and featuring sterling performances from the ensemble cast, this hard-hitting drama has enough raw power to atone for the occasional dramatic lapses. Linus Roache is excellent in the tortured lead role, and the final Communion scene will reduce the hardest of hearts to tears. (S&S March 1995)

Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book

Stephen Sommers; USA 1994; Buena Vista; Certificate PG

Despite the misleading title (this has less to do with Kipling than most Hollywood smash-'em-ups), Disney's long-awaited live action rendering of the adventures of Mowgli is still a treat. Jason Scott Lee is perfectly cast as the adult jungle boy and demonstrates his broad acting scope. Some spectacular locations, impressive animal wrangling, and loveable cameos (including John Cleese as Doctor Plumford) lend an exuberant air. (S&S March 1995)

Rental premiere

The Babysitters

John Paragon; USA 1994; Medusa; Certificate PG; 88 minutes; Producer Yoram Pelman; Screenplay John Paragon; Lead Actors Peter Paul, David Paul, George Lazenby, Christian Cousins, Joseph Cousins

A pair of muscle-bound bodyguards are recruited to take care of two ten-year-olds who prove more than a match for the hapless heroes. Real life wrestlers The Barbarian Brothers demonstrate little comic flair in this formulaic kids' pic.

Death Machine

Stephen Norrington; UK/Japan 1994; Certificate 18; 111 minutes; Producer Dominic Anciano; Screenplay Stephen Norrington; Lead Actors Brad Dourif, Ely Pouget, William Hootkins, Martin McDougall

Former special effects man Steve Norrington directs this low-budget *Alien/Terminator* derivative with efficiency



Brainy couple: Tim Robbins, Meg Ryan in 'I.Q.'



Exotic: Jason Scott Lee, Lena Headey in 'Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book'

but without flair. A feisty female executive is called on to restore order when a secret weapon of a futuristic armaments institution runs amok in the company's headquarters. Brad Dourif performs his trademark mad man role with aplomb, but Ely Pouget is sorely stretched in the lead. The creature itself is unremarkable – imagine H. R. Giger's alien made out of metal instead of flesh.

The Double O Kid

Duncan McLachlan; USA 1994; Hi-Fi; Certificate 15; 88 minutes; Producer Steven Paul; Screenplay Andrea Buck, Duncan McLachlan; Lead Actors Corey Haim, Brigitte Nielsen, Nicole Eggert, John Rhys Davies

In this disposable comedy, ageing baby-face Corey Haim woos the teenage market. A youthful brat, entrusted with the delivery of a deadly package, is called on to save the world from wicked super-brain, Cashpot.

Dream a Little Dream 2

James Lemmo; USA 1994; First Independent; Certificate 12; 88 minutes; Producer Paul Hertzberg; Screenplay David Weisman, Susan Foreman; Lead Actors Corey Feldman, Corey Haim, Robin Lively, Stacie Randall

More from the money-spinning Haim/Feldman production line. The respective Coreys inherit two pairs of magical sunglasses which allow the wearer to control the other's mind. Notwithstanding the perfunctory plot and the obligatory glimpses of scantily-clad women, this is mildly tolerable. Corey Feldman delivers the odd chucklesome comic moment.

The Foreign Student

Eva Sereny; USA/France 1994; Universal; Certificate 15; 91 minutes; Producer Mark Lombardo; Screenplay Menno Meyjes; Lead Actors Robin Givens, Marco Hofschneider, Rick Johnson, Charles Dutton

Set during the 50s, a wide-eyed student from France studying at an American southern state university, falls for a beautiful black schoolteacher (Robin Givens). Serious issues of racial tension are raised, only to be dispensed with in an unimaginative and uninvestigative fashion. An assortment of toe-tapping musical favourites add spice.

Last Gasp

Scott McGinnis; USA 1994; Medusa; Certificate 18; 88 minutes; Producer Stanley Isaacs; Screenplay Pierce Milestone; Lead Actors Robert Patrick, Joanna Pacula, Vyto Ruginis, Mimi Craven

A ruthless property developer who wipes out a tribe of Totec Indians for his own ambitious ends, is turned into a serial killer after he is possessed by the spirit of the tribe's chief. A predictable straight-to-video thriller boosted by some eye-catching locations and Robert Patrick's central performance.

Madonna: Innocence Lost

Bradford May; USA 1994; FoxVideo; Certificate 15; 87 minutes; Producer Christine Sacani; Screenplay Michael J. Murray; Lead Actors Terumi Matthews, Wendie Malick, Jeff Yagher, Dean Stockwell

Based on the biography, *Madonna: Unauthorized* (incorrectly credited on the video sleeve as "Madonna: Authorized") this is TV movie of the month nonsense par excellence. Terumi Matthews may have perfected Madonna's look and gestures, but it's impossible not to fall about laughing at the superficial, half-witted dialogue. Appalling 'let's do the gig here' moments include: Madonna muscling her way into an audition with a top French producer, and Madonna getting a DJ to play her latest tape to a rapturous dance floor crowd.

The Radioland Murders

Mel Smith; USA 1994; Universal; Certificate 12; Producers Rick McCallum, Fred Roos; Screenplay Jeff Reno, Ron Osborn; Lead Actors Mary Stuart Masterson, Brian Benben, Ned Beatty, Michael McKean

British comedian Mel Smith directs an impressive cast through a series of farcical escapades in this nostalgic homage to the golden days of radio. A Chicago radio station, broadcasting its first night of live drama, music and comedy, is plagued by a series of backstage murders. Loopy turns from the likes of Chris Lloyd (predictably but pleasantly wacky as the sound effects man) and sumptuous set designs make this intriguing, if uneven, entertainment.

The Scout

Michael Ritchie; USA 1994; FoxVideo; Certificate 12; 98 minutes; Producers Albert S. Ruddy, Andre E. Morgan; Screenplay Andrew Bergman, Albert Brooks, Monica Johnson; Lead Actors Albert Brooks, Brendan Fraser, Dianne Wiest

A baseball scout recruits a renegade new player to turn his fortune around, but has to prove the newcomer's sanity to a psychiatrist. Director Michael Ritchie makes the most of an uninspiring premise, building on Albert Brooks' script and engaging screen presence to create a

Scream magic

I was looking for, but couldn't find, a *Film Comment* article of a few years back so as to accurately quote its observation that those of us who were exposed at a tender age to mid-to-late 50s movies such as *12 Angry Men* and *Inherit the Wind*, would probably become liberals for life. This is certainly true for me. But more than that, I got a taste from these films for 'ideas'. The drama of these movies seemed to me to be the true stuff of adulthood.

Even more exciting, I discovered that metaphoric and subversive ideas were to be found in horror and science fiction movies such as *The Incredible Shrinking Man* ("To God there is no zero") and *Forbidden Planet* ("Monsters from the id"). Films such as Hammer's version of *Dracula* (1958) offered an extraordinary emotional depiction of the seductiveness of evil, and scriptwriter Nigel Kneale's television series, and later, movie, *Quatermass and the Pit* suggested that evil itself was a trait inherited in pre-history from the martians who conquered our planet before we were even human; ideas, in short, were all around.

When I discovered that Edgar Allan Poe was considered by the French to be not merely a teller of tales of mystery and imagination, but a father of Surrealism, and that Hitchcock was a moralist, not merely the master of suspense – well, from my earliest days, I believed that horror films could be as profound as any more 'worthy' item and that it was possible to marry the commercial (or at least the popular, the entertaining) with the artistic (or at least the subversive, the disturbing). Starting out as a putative screenwriter, I became involved in writing a film adaptation of the story of Sawney Bean, the legendary seventeenth-century Scottish cannibal. Our plan was to make it in the documentary style of Peter Watkins' films *Culloden* and *The War Game*, and feeling that Hammer Films needed to go in just such a new direction, it was sent off to them. We received the fastest ever rejection, with a sentiment I still treasure, "Hammer deals in horror, not nausea."

So the video release of a new batch of Hammer horror titles to mark the 40th anniversary of *The Quatermass Xperiment* (Hammer's first officially recognised fantasy/horror movie was spelt with an 'X' to capitalise on the still new 'X' certificate. Ah, showmanship!) has sparked off ruminations about the state of the genre today. Rather gloomy, negative thoughts, in fact – where have all the good ideas gone? Of course, good ideas seem just as rare in any movie at the moment, but the lack of ideas in the fantasy genre – up until very recently the most vibrant source of cinematic imagination – is especially to be lamented.

I suppose it's the very excellence of all the new technologies that are partly to blame. For instance, I had never really been able to take werewolves seriously, figuring they were a myth humankind had invented to explain the truly

despicable depredations of mediaeval serial killers (hence the origin of one of my Hammer films, *Demons of the Mind*). Until, that is, John Landis' *An American Werewolf in London* came along. Its extraordinary special effects make the man/wolf transformation utterly convincing – but it was Landis' modest yet loving playfulness with the genre which really took it to new heights. But besides this, the only other recent landmark marriage of idea and technology I can think of is the *Back to the Future* trilogy. Since around the time of John Carpenter's *The Thing*, special effects rather than ideas seem to be the *raison d'être* for most film-makers.

Ideas are what you certainly get in Hammer's *Quatermass* trilogy – though, ironically, as with *12 Angry Men*, the ideas originated on television (as did Kneale's equally mesmerising *The Abominable Snowman*) where they were pursued with far greater intelligence. In the film of *The Quatermass Experiment*, the creature in Westminster Abbey is destroyed by electrocution. In the television series, *Quatermass* appeals to its last remaining vestige of humanity, and it destroys itself. Even watered down, it's arguable whether they would have got off the ground as original screenplays had they not already been thundering successes on the television.

It has to be said that some of the ideas in the other Hammer titles are just plain laughable – for instance, *The Plague of the Zombies* in which the wicked Cornish squire, back from Haiti, turns the villagers into zombies when they refuse to keep risking death and maiming in his tin mines. The film has my all-time favourite visual *non sequitur* when the squire's young assistants whip the zombies to make them work faster.

People also find *To the Devil a Daughter* – which I co-scripted – pretty laughable; especially the cosmic action climax in which evil incarnate is destroyed by Richard Widmark beaming Christopher

Lee with a rock. In my rejected version, we went to another dimension and Mr Lee fought it out with the Devil himself.

One of my best ideas ever, and very much inspired by Mr Kneale, was to bring the concept of DNA into *To the Devil a Daughter*, my belief being that if there is such a thing as magic, it must be a form of science which our current brand of science has yet to discover. It would be through the metaphor of genetic engineering that our Devil's daughter would be created (after all, *Rosemary's Baby* and *It's Alive* had already done conventional demon baby stories, and we were struggling to find a new angle). But the great minds at EMI, who were putting up most of the money, decreed that the DNA would make it a science fiction film, and they wanted horror.

Despite such lunacies, the best of the Hammer films have more than stood the test of time, though changing times themselves found the company unable to keep up. Although Hammer has never actually gone out of business, effectively now it seems to be recycling its past projects. While I was searching for the *Film Comment*, I came across an article about Hammer which wondered why the company had declined over the years: "Perhaps the men at Hammer were too intelligent for their own good. Maybe they thought too much of knowledge, and asked too many hypothetical questions to have faith in their own artifice." it suggested.

In time, maybe there will be a central data bank where a viewer can dial up any movie for home viewing. What sort of society might then exist? Hopefully one where to God there is still no zero. But what about the monsters from the id? Will they have been finally domesticated in virtual reality? Hopefully, there will still be some film-makers left to ask questions and disturb our minds, rather than just our stomachs.

To the Devil a Daughter is available on Warner's Terror Vision label



Happier times: Hammer Films' first horror movie 'The Quatermass Xperiment'

delightful little movie of rare charm and wit. Brendan Fraser and Dianne Wiest rise to the comedic challenges offered by the script.

Retail

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension

W. D. Richter; USA 1984; Unique Films; £12.99; Certificate 15

African Shorts:

Denko/Borom Sarret/Le Certificat d'indigence

Mohamed Camara/Ousmane Sembène/Moussa Bathily; Burkino Faso/Senegal 1992/1963/1981; Academy Video; £12.99; Colour/B/W; Subtitles; Certificate PG

A selection of short films which offer an overview of black African film-making over the past 30 years. Ousmane Sembène's *Borom Sarret*, the first film to be made in Africa by a black African, is a stark, understated drama about a cart driver living in the poor part of the city, who has his cart confiscated. The voice-over, read by Sembène himself, lends the film a documentary feel. In its own quiet way, this is a trenchant critique of the way bourgeois, urban values destroy a traditional way of life. Equally striking, but very different, is *Denko*, shot in gorgeous colour in the Burkino Faso countryside and structured like a folk tale. It's the story of a mother and her blind son struggling to eke out an existence in a small village. (MFB Nos. 469/639)

American Yakuza

Frank Capello; USA/Japan 1994; PolyGram; £10.99; Certificate 18 (S&S Video August 1994)

Baby's Day Out

Patrick Read Johnson; USA 1994; FoxVideo; £10.99; Certificate PG (S&S September 1994)

Bandit Queen

Shekhar Kapur; India/UK 1994; Mainline Pictures; £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 18 Controversial Indian pic based on the true story of Phoolan Devi, the so-called Bandit Queen. A child-bride, raped by her husband, cast out of her village, kidnapped and abused by outlaws, she fought back against her oppressors by forming her own violent gang. The violence is a little hard to stomach; lose sight of the context and this comes perilously close to being exploitative. (S&S February 1995)

Beyond Bedlam

Vadim Jean; UK 1993; PolyGram; £10.99; Certificate 18 (S&S May 1994)

Bhaji on the Beach

Gurinder Chadha; UK 1993; Channel 4 Films; £13.99; Certificate 15 (S&S February 1994)

Black Beauty

Caroline Thompson; UK/USA 1994; Warner; £14.99; Certificate U Handsomely mounted adaptation of Anna Sewall's famous equine fable. Thompson directs with great gusto and there are some memorable set-pieces. The horses look and move a treat and are



'Broadway Melody of 1938': Eleanor Powell

complemented by well-observed cameos from the likes of Jim Carter, Peter Cook, Eleanor Bron and David Thewlis. The one major drawback is Alan Cumming's narration; with his squeaky, excitable delivery, he makes Black Beauty sound as plaintive as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. (S&S February 1995) □

Blown Away

Stephen Hopkins; USA 1994; MGM/UA; £14.99; Certificate 15 (S&S September 1994)

Braindead

Peter Jackson; New Zealand 1992; PolyGram; £10.99; Certificate 18 (S&S June 1993)

Britannia Hospital

Lindsay Anderson; UK 1982; Warner; £10.99; Certificate 15
Chaotic, ragged, but occasionally inspired state-of-the-nation comedy set in a hospital where half the staff are on strike and a royal visitor is due any minute on an official tour. The film lacks the formal elegance of some of Anderson's earlier work, but crackles with his usual, irascible wit. Class prejudice, medical arrogance, racial intolerance and British breakfasts all come under his caustic eye. He also takes a few wild swings at bureaucratic incompetence. Leonard Rossiter is wonderful as that most put-upon of all British individuals, the overworked, underpaid middle manager. (MFB No. 581)

Broadway Melody of 1938

Roy Del Ruth; USA 1937; MGM/UA; £10.99; B/W; Certificate U
MGM musical sequel which is on the lavish side as far as staging is concerned, but whose overfamiliar plot looks cobbled together. Eleanor Powell is the young hooper dreaming of stardom, Robert Taylor the producer/composer who may make her dreams come true. There is some hokum about racehorses along the way, as well as a couple of show stoppers from Judy Garland and Sophie Tucker. (MFB No. 45)

Cabin in the Sky

Vincente Minnelli; USA 1943; MGM/UA; £10.99; B/W; Certificate U
A sort of musical variation on *A Matter of Life and Death*, this adaptation of a Broadway hit features an all-black cast. Eddie Anderson is Little Joe, a feckless gambler languishing on death's door after a bar room brawl. Ethel Waters is his devoted wife, Petunia, and Lena Horne is the beautiful Georgia Brown, the

temptress sent down to earth by Lucifer to steer Little Joe into further mischief. Waters sings like an angel, and with the Duke Ellington band performing in Jim Henry's Paradise Nightclub, there is plenty of music to savour. (MFB No.113)

The Flintstones

Brian Levant; USA 1994; Universal; £13.99; Certificate U (S&S August 1994)

Fiorile

Paolo Taviani, Vittorio Taviani; Italy/France/Germany 1993; Arrow Video; £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15
Sombre but resonant Taviani brothers saga which charts the fortunes of the Benedettis, a family nicknamed the "Maledettis" by their Tuscan neighbours because they have so much bad luck. The story, told in flashback by a father to his two children, begins in Napoleonic times, and repeats itself again and again as the original curse takes new effect. With its emphasis on myth, history and memory, this shares the same preoccupations as many of the brothers' earlier films. (S&S April 1995)

Freefall

John Irvin; South Africa/Venezuela/UK 1993; PolyGram; £10.99; Certificate 18 (S&S Video May 1994)

The Getting of Wisdom

Bruce Beresford; Australia 1977; Art House; £12.99; Certificate PG
This is an adaptation of a famous Australian novel, written in 1909, about a country girl's tough experiences at a snooty Melbourne boarding school. There's plenty of starch on display, but Beresford's eye for a shot and a spirited performance from Susannah Fowle as the heroine, Laura Tweedle Ramsbotham, lend a little animation to what otherwise might have been a very stuffy affair. (MFB No. 544)

Hannie Caulder

Burt Kennedy; UK 1971; Unique Films; £10.99; Certificate 18
British-made Western in which Burt Kennedy trespasses on Sam Peckinpah territory. He has an eclectic cast, with three rugged old-timers (Strother Martin, Ernest Borgnine and Jack Elam) as the outlaws and Raquel Welch as a woman set on revenge after they murder her husband. An absurdly miscast Christopher Lee pops up as a Mexican gunman and there's even a cameo from Diana Dors as a saloon bar hooker. However, despite some nice touches (point-of-view shots through the barrel of a shot gun, slow motion violence, spectacular sunsets), this is a little too derivative for its own good. (MFB No. 456)

The Harder They Come

Perry Henzell; Jamaica 1972; Art House; £12.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15
Jamaican country lad Ivan (Jimmy Cliff) turns up in the big city hoping to make his fortune. He releases a record, for which he is paid \$20, and decides that drug trafficking is more lucrative. Brilliantly directed, this offers both a documentary-style overview of gangsterism and poverty in Kingston and some very wild comedy. (MFB No. 523)

The Haunting

Robert Wise; UK 1963; Warner; £14.99; B/W;

Widescreen; Certificate 18

Touted by those who haven't seen *The Sound of Music* as Robert Wise's most effective horror film, this is a bloodcurdler-by-numbers, a stagey, contrived haunted house saga which invokes all the old clichés, but is so slickly done that they're still genuinely frightening. Richard Johnson is the academic fascinated by evil; Claire Bloom and Julie Harris are the two psychic, repressed sorts he invites to join him at the gruesome New England mansion. (MFB No. 360)

The Mark of Zorro

Rouben Mamoulian; USA 1940; FoxVideo; £12.99; B/W; Certificate U
Exhilarating swashbuckler directed with typical flair by Mamoulian. Ty Power is the man in the mask who likes scratching the last letter in the alphabet on villains' tunics with his sword; Basil Rathbone is his arch-enemy, Esteban. There's precious little time wasted on dialogue as Mamoulian is more concerned with keeping the blades flashing. (MFB No. 86)

Mister Ten Percent/The Cracksmen

Peter Graham Scott; UK 1967/1963; Warner; £9.99; Certificate U (MFB Nos. 402/355)

Petticoat Pirates/Sands of the Desert

David Macdonald/John Paddy Carstairs; UK 1961/1960; Warner; £9.99; Certificate U
Charlie Drake was a sort of Norman Wisdom for the swinging 60s; an impish, leering figure who gambolled his way through several lacklustre comedies. These two are about par for the course. In one, he plays a holiday company rep who ends up in the desert. In the other, he's a saucy sailor who spends most of his time staring up Wrens' skirts. (MFB Nos. 336/320)

Pirates

Roman Polanski; France/Tunisia 1986; PolyGram; £10.99; Certificate PG (MFB No. 633)

Que la hête meure

Claude Chabrol; France/Italy 1969; Art House; £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15
When his young son is killed in a hit-and-run accident, a grieving father (Michel Duchaussoy) vows to track down the driver. Eventually, he works out that his girlfriend's boorish brother-in-law (Jean Yanne), is responsible. There's a sense that Chabrol could turn out this kind of terse, intricately plotted thriller in his

sleep. Still, it's an eerie enough affair, bolstered by a compellingly unpleasant performance from Yanne. (MFB No. 456)

Razorback

Russell Mulcahy; Australia 1983; Warner; £7.99; Certificate 18 (MFB No. 613)

La Reine Margot

Patrice Chéreau; France/Germany/Italy 1994; Guild; £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 18
There's nothing remotely coy or lily-livered about this sanguine slice of history set during the French religious wars of the sixteenth century. The St Bartholomew's Day Massacre of the Huguenots is shown in graphic detail. The performances are every bit as visceral as the battle scenes. In her dark dress and with her hair hidden, Virna Lisi, as the terminally wicked Catherine de Médici is like the wicked witch of the east, and Isabelle Adjani plays Margot as a sort of ice queen version of Morticia Addams. This is as much horror film as heritage cinema, and all the better for it. (S&S January 1995)

Rookie of the Year

Daniel Stern; USA 1993; FoxVideo; £10.99; Certificate PG (S&S June 1994)

La Rupture

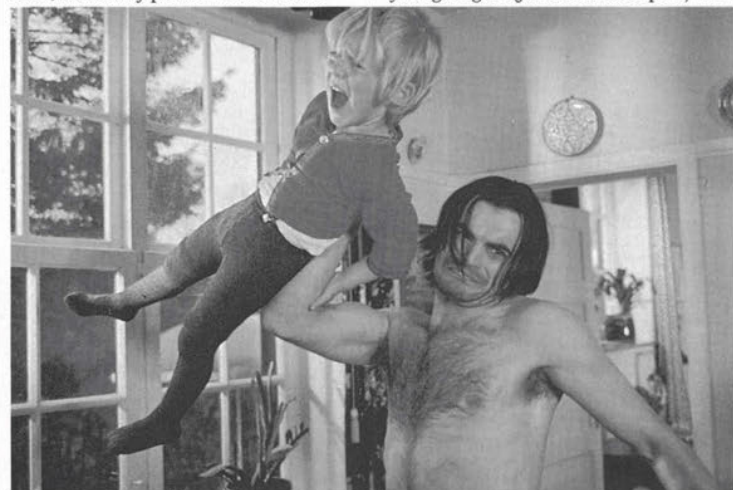
Claude Chabrol; France 1970; Art House; £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 18
Another offering from the prolific Chabrol, this is a superior thriller which takes characteristic pleasure in exposing bourgeois hypocrisy. Stéphane Audran is an ex-stripper who comes into conflict with her wealthy, respectable but ruthless father-in-law when she seeks a divorce from her drug addict husband. It's grim stuff, but Chabrol leavens matters by having her move into a boarding house which is almost exclusively occupied by clucking, bridge-playing old biddies who like to gossip. (MFB No. 467)

The Sandlot Kids

David Mickey Evans; USA 1993; FoxVideo; £10.99; Certificate PG (S&S August 1995)

The Sexual Life of the Belgians 1950-1978 (La Vie sexuelle des Belges 1950-1978)

Jan Bucquoy; Belgium 1994; Tartan Video; £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 18
Wry account of the growing pains of a young Belgian (Jean-Henri Compère) with



Unhappy families: 'La Rupture'

END NOTES

By Mark Kermode



Blue notes: Derek Jarman, whose soundtrack for his final film 'Blue' is a mix of words and music

A recent conversation I had with experimental British musician and composer Paul Schutze bore intriguing fruit. Musing on the rise of dialogue and sound effects on film soundtrack albums (traditionally the domain of uninterrupted songs and scores), Schutze observed that such recordings had become the latter-day equivalent of that much maligned musical staple of 60s and 70s rock music, the concept album. Whereas in the 60s there was The Small Faces' 'Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake', in which the fluent gibberish of television and radio personality Stanley Unwin sparred with psychedelic musical tones, now we have the *Reservoir Dogs* soundtrack album in which comedian Steven Wright steps into Unwin's shoes to recite beautiful nonsense from Tarantino's jukebox cacophony of classic 70s hits. And what, if not a concept album, is Trent Reznor's *Natural Born Killers* soundtrack CD, which similarly blends words and music in an aural assault and boasts something approaching a narrative structure? In another twist, experimental musicians such as Barry Adams (and to some extent, Paul Schutze himself) devise soundtrack albums for films which do not exist, providing a validation of the soundtrack album form as something other than a mere adjunct to the world of cinema.

Now, leaping recklessly into the conceptual void comes 'Live Blue Roma' from Simon Turner Fisher – a logical extension of the film soundtrack-as-rock-concept-album in which the sounds are culled, not from a movie, but from a live concert. Subtitled 'The Archeology of Sound', this enticingly baffling offering features words by Derek Jarman (to accompany the changelessly coloured screen of his final film, *Blue*) performed live to the strains of Turner's ambient musical accompaniment, played by a band of talented musicians. On first listening, 'Live Blue Roma' bears a distinctly uneasy resemblance to the Pink Floyd composition, 'Shine on You Crazy Diamond'; the almost inaudible synthesiser chords pierced by single guitar strings eerily recalling that big

daddy of extravagant rock concept albums, Floyd's 'Wish You Were Here'. Further listening reveals Brian Eno and Harold Budd as possible influences, resembling a live performance of their joint album 'Plateaux of Mirror', but with hypnotically portentous voice-overs on 'Live Blue' beseeching the listener to abandon "the pandemonium of image" and embrace "the universal blue." Whatever its origins, this is a live rock concept album, dignified by its intelligence and lent weighty import by Jarman's profound acceptance of his own imminent death from Aids, but a live rock concept album none the less. And one which carries a message.

If one is still not convinced, browse through the accompanying sleeve notes in which award-winning rock critic Jon Savage flits through the central role of the colour blue in rock's great heritage, from Robert Johnson to New Order (via The Velvet Underground, acid house and Carl Jung). Savage finishes by describing Turner's work as existing in "a field so new that it has no name yet."

Jarman himself, of course, worked extensively in the pop promo arena, providing (or at least overseeing) images to accompany the chart-topping tones of The Smiths and The Pet Shop Boys. Ironically, Jarman ended his life disillusioned with the failure of pop promos to nurture and bring forth talented new film-makers, and was unimpressed by the general corporate noisiness of modern rock. Shortly before his death, Jarman told me that he wanted to create an area of silence amid the hubbub of modern entertainment (pop, films, television); if *Blue* had achieved this, then he was happy.

How strange then that this bizarre offspring of his final film should take its place among the pantheon of rock's most excessive (and now widely disowned) artistic forms. And this from a man whose gleeful championing of the joys of punk rock music still remains one of the most convincing arguments for burning your entire collection of Genesis records. The concept album is dead – long live the concept album.

an eventful sex life. In between marriage and bungled romances, he learns to make Molotov cocktails and contemplates writing a novel. Engaging in a deadpan sort of a way, this is loosely based on Bucquoy's own life. (S&S June 1995)

Some Will, Some Won't

Duncan Wood; UK 1969; Warner; £9.99; Certificate PG
Thoroughly feeble British comedy which embarrasses a distinguished cast. Wilfrid Brambell is a wealthy prankster who dies while getting up to some sort of mischief on top of Big Ben. Michael Hordern, Thora Hird and Ronnie Corbett are among his relatives who must perform various bizarre tasks if they're to get a share of his will. (MFB No. 436)

Soylent Green

Richard Fleischer; USA 1973; MGM/UA; £14.99; Widescreen; Certificate 15
(MFB No. 474)

A Study in Terror

James Hill; UK 1965; Art House; £12.99; Certificate 15
John Neville makes a wonderful Sherlock Holmes. Fastidious in language and manner and highly neurotic, he has the part down pat. Unfortunately, the film doesn't do his performance justice. It's full of the usual Victorian knees-up-in-the-pub palaver, garishly and witlessly shot. The script is tasteless hokum which has Holmes in hot pursuit of Jack the Ripper. (MFB No. 383)

Till Death Us Do Part

Norman Cohen; UK 1969; Warner; £9.99; Certificate U
To its credit, this television spin-off makes some attempt to broaden its canvas: we start with the Second World War, and see how Alf Garnett coped with rationing and the Blitz. But then we quickly march through time to the mid-60s. Once back in familiar territory, the film abandons its cinematic pretensions and reverts to trusted sitcom style with Alf ranting at all and sundry. Although he's brilliantly played by Warren Mitchell, his sheer obnoxiousness grates. (MFB No. 421)

Totally F***ed Up

Greg Araki; USA 1993; Dangerous To Know; £15.99; Certificate 18
Episodic (the story is told in what the credits refer to as 15 celluloid fragments), occasionally disjointed, but highly inventive portrait of six teenagers, "young, bored and gay in LA". Much of the film is shot on camcorder and has the characters talking directly to camera. Araki also makes ingenious use of his locations, with the six discussing their lives and loves in shopping malls or beneath vast advertising billboards. (S&S February 1995)

True Lies

James Cameron; USA 1994; Universal; £14.99; Certificate 15
(S&S September 1994)

The Wild One

Laslo Benedek; USA 1953; Columbia TriStar; Price £12.99; B/W; Certificate PG
Released, along with *On the Waterfront*, as part of Columbia's Restored Classic Collection, this teen pic has become almost quaint with age. Brando is the biker with attitude. But beneath his cap

and leathers, as local girl Kathie (Mary Murphy) soon surmises, he's nothing but a big softie. (MFB No. 257)

The Woman Next Door (La Femme d'à côté)

François Truffaut; France 1981; Artificial Eye; £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15
Mediocre late Truffaut film which never quite overcomes its stifling suburban setting. Gérard Depardieu is the happily married man whose life is turned upside down when his old flame, Fanny Ardant, also now married, moves with her husband into the next door house. (MFB No. 577)

Retail premiere

Clive Barker's Salome/The Forbidden

Clive Barker; UK 1973/1978; Redemption; £12.99; B/W; Silent; Certificate 18; 18 minutes/36 minutes; Producer Clive Barker; Screenplay Clive Barker; Lead Actors Doug Bradley, Phil Rimmer, Clive Barker.
Two experimental shorts made by Clive Barker and friends in Liverpool in the mid-70s. *Salome* is a haunting, dream-like fable, shot in murky, expressionist black and white, which has as much in common with the work of avant garde film-makers such as Maya Deren as it does with Barker's later horror pics. *The Forbidden* contains imagery and ideas which would later turn up in *Hellraiser*, but is also resolutely arty. Featuring interviews with Barker and his cast (many of whom continued to work with him), the package is aimed squarely at fans.

Halfaouine

Férid Boughedir; Tunisia 1990; Connoisseur Video; £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15; 96 minutes; Producers Ahmed Attia, Hassen Daldoul, Eliane Stutterheim; Screenplay Férid Boughedir; Lead Actors Mohamed Dris, Mustafa Adueni, Rabia Ben Abdallah
"When does a boy become a man?" Noura, the adolescent hero of this acutely observed rites-of-passage drama, asks his mentor, Salih. Noura is an observer, teetering on the brink of sexual and political awareness. Men ask him to run their errands, women don't seem to notice him, even as he lurks in the bath-house determined to see them naked. Boughedir uses the cityscapes of Tunis to fine effect. What might have seemed merely prurient is lent a powerful resonance by the director's ability to capture the boy's sense of baffled wonderment at the mysteries of adulthood.

Ride Him Cowboy/Haunted Gold

Fred Allen/Mack V. Wright; USA 1932/1933; MGM/UA; £9.99; B/W; Certificate PG; 110 minutes; Producer Leon Schlesinger; Screenplay Scott Mason, Adele Buffington; Lead Actors John Wayne, Duke
Two of the low-budget Westerns John Wayne made for Warner Bros in the early 30s. The first is reckoned to have established him as a star, but for much of the film he plays second fiddle to his equine co-star, Duke. This unfortunate animal is framed for murder and put in the dock. With some spirited fisticuffs in the final reel, chases, crooked judges and an awkwardly contrived romance, this is brisk, unassuming fare which doubtless kept Saturday morning audiences well pleased in its day.

Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL Facsimile 0171 436 2327. e-mail address: S&S@bfi.org.uk

Jeanne Buñuel

From John Baxter

Having just published the authorised biography of Luis Buñuel, I hope I may be allowed to comment on B. Ruby Rich's "Meet Jeanne Buñuel" (S&S August).

Jeanne Buñuel was too ill to see me while I was writing my book, but with the permission of her son, Juan-Luis, I quoted from her memoir *Memories of a Woman Without a Piano*, and spoke at length with her ex-daughter-in-law Joyce about years spent with Jeanne in the house at Cerrado Felix Cuevas while Don Luis's grandchildren were growing up.

For all the seductiveness of Rich's pleading for Jeanne as Buñuel's 'muse' and for her suppressed creativity, there's little evidence of either. Even when Jeanne might have played a decisive creative role in Buñuel's work, during the making of *Un Chien Andalou*, she confined herself to 'minding' the young and naive Salvador Dalí, ferrying the payroll to the studio, and exercising those skills which she already knew and enjoyed, in particular sewing.

As for the legend of the 'beloved' upright piano which Buñuel traded away for three bottles of champagne, he certainly discouraged her from taking piano lessons during their courtship in Paris, in part from jealousy of her handsome teacher, but also because he believed her untalented. However, since she and Buñuel were often separated for months at a time throughout his career, Jeanne could have played the piano to her heart's content in his absence, as well as indulging in the sexual experiment for which, to the horror of the puritanical Luis, she often expressed an ambition. Instead, like him, she remained silent and celibate. Both Joyce and Juan-Luis speak of the chatter of a Singer sewing machine as the single most familiar sound in the house.

As for her 'surrealist' needlework, an example of which Rich reproduces, nobody I spoke to mentioned Jeanne ever referring knowledgeably to surrealism, nor does she suggest any such understanding in the recorded interviews that make up *Memories of a Woman Without a Piano*. The image of animals gathered at a table, about to eat a naked woman, is probably copied from or inspired by Mexican folk art. Specifically it recalls the *pastorela* costume plays of Mexico City which Buñuel admired.

Rich implies that it was from admiration of Jeanne that Buñuel used French actresses like Catherine Deneuve and Jeanne Moreau. In fact he much preferred Spanish-speaking performers, since his poor hearing and crude French and English made communication with others difficult. His favourite actress was the Mexican Silvia Pinal. He wanted her for both *Diary of a Chambermaid* and *Tristana*, and was only persuaded to accept Moreau for *Diary* by a producer Serge Silberman, who prudently got him drunk before their first lunch meeting. After that, the sensual Moreau's scarfing up of a butter and garlic sauce with a piece of bread persuaded him that she would make an ideal Célestine. Deneuve was imposed by the producers of *Belle de Jour*, and by Francois Truf-

faut, who pressed Buñuel to cast her. As for Delphine Seyrig, Bulle Ogier and Stéphane Audran in *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, Audran told me their roles mattered so little to him that he suggested they sort out among themselves which one they played.

I don't mean to diminish Jeanne's importance to Buñuel. On the contrary, Rich's claim that he "took her [...] for granted and valued her [...] little" seems to me quite unjust. Theirs was a passionate relationship, rooted in powerful mutual physical attraction, but also in Buñuel's sadistic fantasies and Jeanne's masochistic subservience to them. Since childhood, he dreamed of owning a castle, within which, like Gilles de Rais and the characters of de Sade's *120 Days of Sodom*, he could live free of all constraint. The knowledge of a wife sequestered and waiting in the house he had built in Mexico City was integral to his sexual sense of himself. He would never have been unfaithful to her, nor inflicted on her the tortures imagined by de Sade, but the knowledge of her availability nourished his repeated infidelities and cruelties of the imagination.

Buñuel was genuinely of all nations and of none. Michael Wood compares him to Odysseus, constantly travelling because absence from home "allowed him to practise being No One... and nourished his secret personality and his ability to be everywhere." Undoubtedly Jeanne understood this. The Buñuels' friends in Mexico regard *Woman Without a Piano* as a cantankerous exception to Jeanne's model life of almost noble self-abnegation. To me, it's the ill-advised but understandable outcry of a Penelope, who, after 50 years of fending off suitors and exercising her craft, both as a means of survival and an affirmation of her sense of herself, looked on the unfinished tapestry and realised how much she had sacrificed to make her husband a legend. Paris, France

Versions of 'True Romance'

From Adam Clark

In view of the misleading letter from David Lister (S&S August) I felt I should set the record straight regarding the various versions of *True Romance*. Lister is correct in saying that the video has been cut, because the video is exactly the same as the UK cinema print, which was three seconds shorter than the US cinema print due to BBFC cuts.

The unrated US laserdisc edition, which Lister speculates is "very similar if not identical" to the UK cinema release is actually three minutes and 40 seconds longer than the UK theatrical and video releases and three minutes 37 seconds longer than the US R rated theatrical releases.

The main differences are to the scenes where Clarence kills Drexler, where Alabama is beaten up by and then kills the mob hit man and the final shoot-out. The original (unrated) version has Alabama killing police officer Dimes, whereas the cut versions (i.e. US theatrical, US R rated video, and all UK versions) have him shot by a wounded Mafioso. Apparently the MPAA could not accept a female civilian who had the audience's sympathy all through the film killing a cop and getting away with it!

Finally, Lister states that the US laserdisc is eight or nine minutes longer than the UK video. The cuts, as stated above, account for

three minutes 40 seconds; any other difference in running time will be due to the difference in video running times between our PAL system (25 f.p.s.) and the US NTSC system (24 f.p.s.) which Lister has not taken into account. Further information can be found in *Video Watchdog* 22.

Warners have now dropped the misleading "uncut" sticker for the sell through edition, billing it as "original cinema version": which is slightly misleading...

Chorlton, Manchester

Versions of "violence"

From Brian Parkinson

Martin Barker's response (S&S August) to my previous letter (S&S July) was instructive in clarifying his position concerning "media violence". I think that both of us can now agree on one thing at least: that we have been talking partly at cross purposes. Incontestably, it would be naive to argue that "violence" represents a putative active ingredient that will make any film suddenly dangerous to vulnerable viewers. What people refer to as "media violence" manifests itself in various, partly incommensurate ways depending on narrative context (among other things). Not all of these manifestations will work on viewers in similar ways, nor will viewers necessarily construct comparable sense out of every instance. Barker apparently takes this to mean that "It is just stupid... to think that 'violence' can be abstracted from the hugely different contexts of meaning and use in which it occurs - any more than you can with 'smiling', 'buying a cup of coffee', or 'the use of fast editing'" (S&S July). This is where I stop agreeing. Admittedly, each of these categories may be loose and flexible but we would not be able to communicate with one another about them at all unless their different instantiations generally shared some semantic core. Obviously, it is illegitimate to generalise from one specific example of "media violence" or "smiling" to every single other one but it seems improbable that there are no common features whatsoever under any circumstances. Psychological research into "effects of media violence" may well be stupid and naive in many cases, but it is not always entirely meaningless as implied in a blanket way by Barker's original article. Furthermore, effective engagement in any debate (however misguided it seems) cannot be achieved by completely rejecting established terms of reference.

University of Leicester

Aotearoa as was

From Lizzie Francke

Re Peter Calder's letter (S&S August), and my review of *Once Were Warriors*, I would very much like to apologise for the misspellings of Aotearoa. These glitches in the text have nothing to do with me: nor has the line "the promised land of Maori myth". I wrote: "This is the polluted earth that Jake and Beth have inherited which is far from their promised haven of Aotearoa (which means, rather ethereally, thin white cloud)." I believe this gives a rather different emphasis (the translation I found in a dictionary). I liked the film very much, but I didn't think *Sight and Sound* was in the business of coming up with hyperbole to persuade people that a film was worth seeing. London



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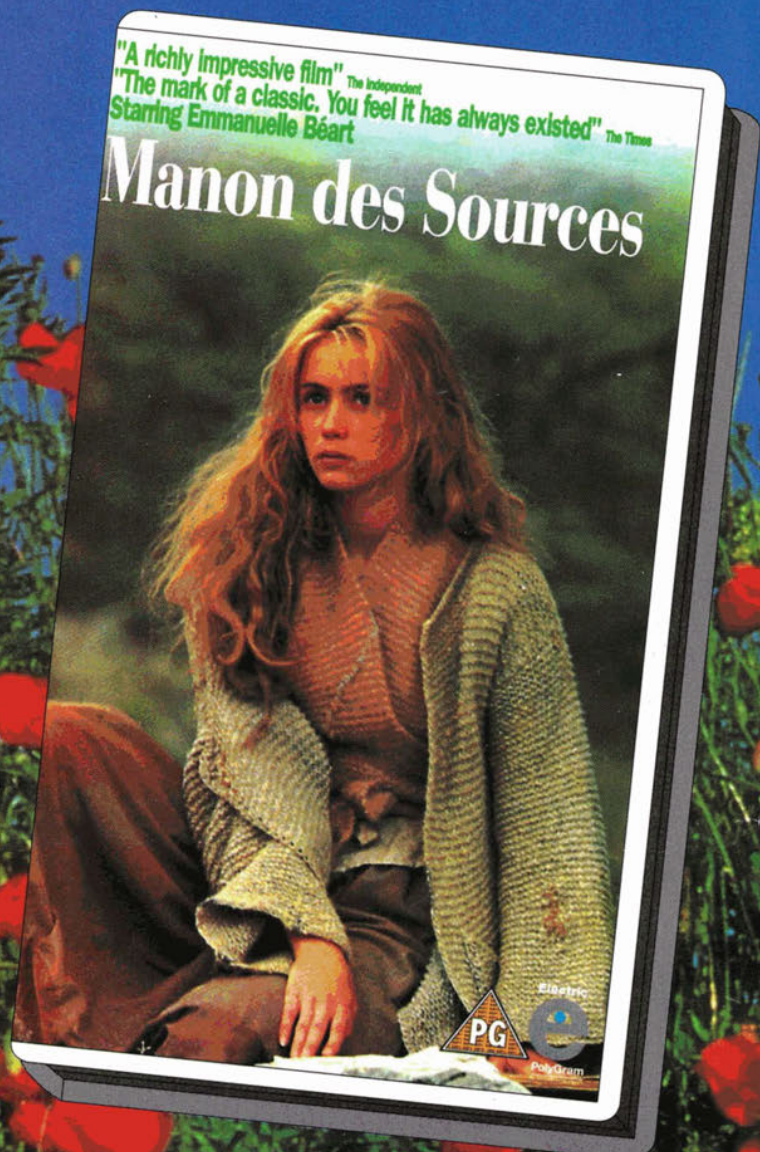
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